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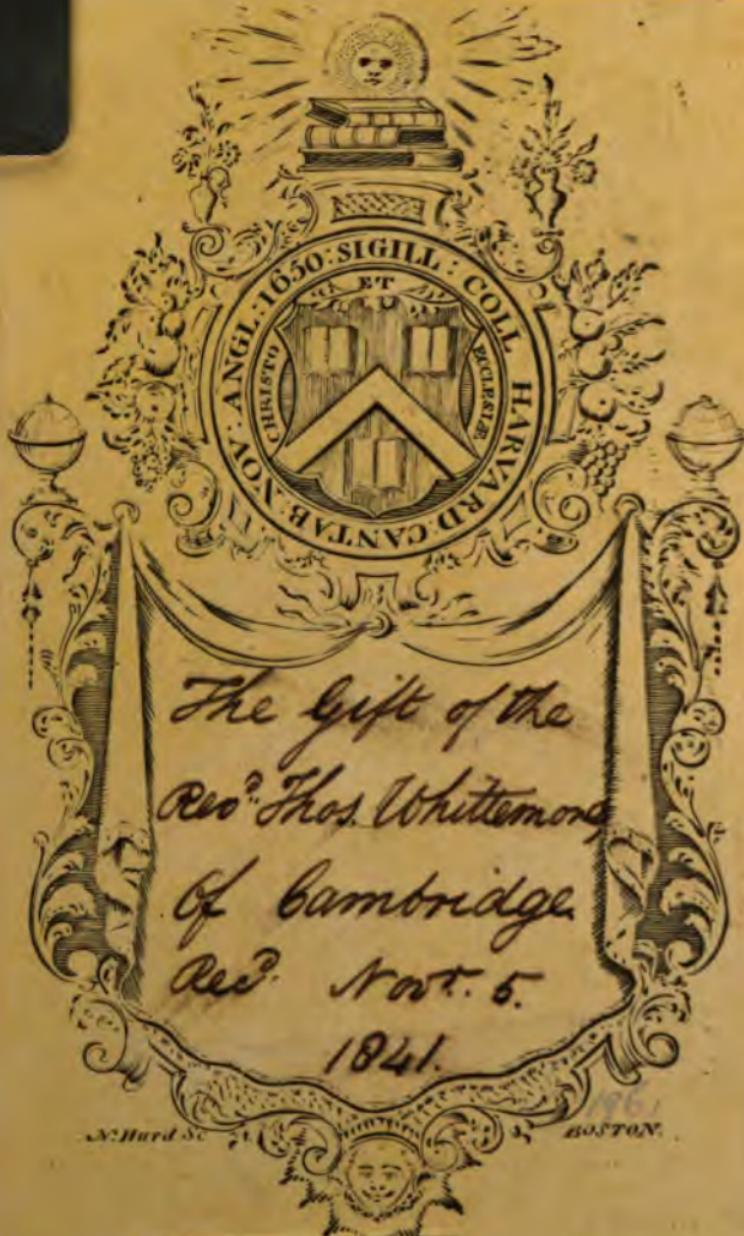
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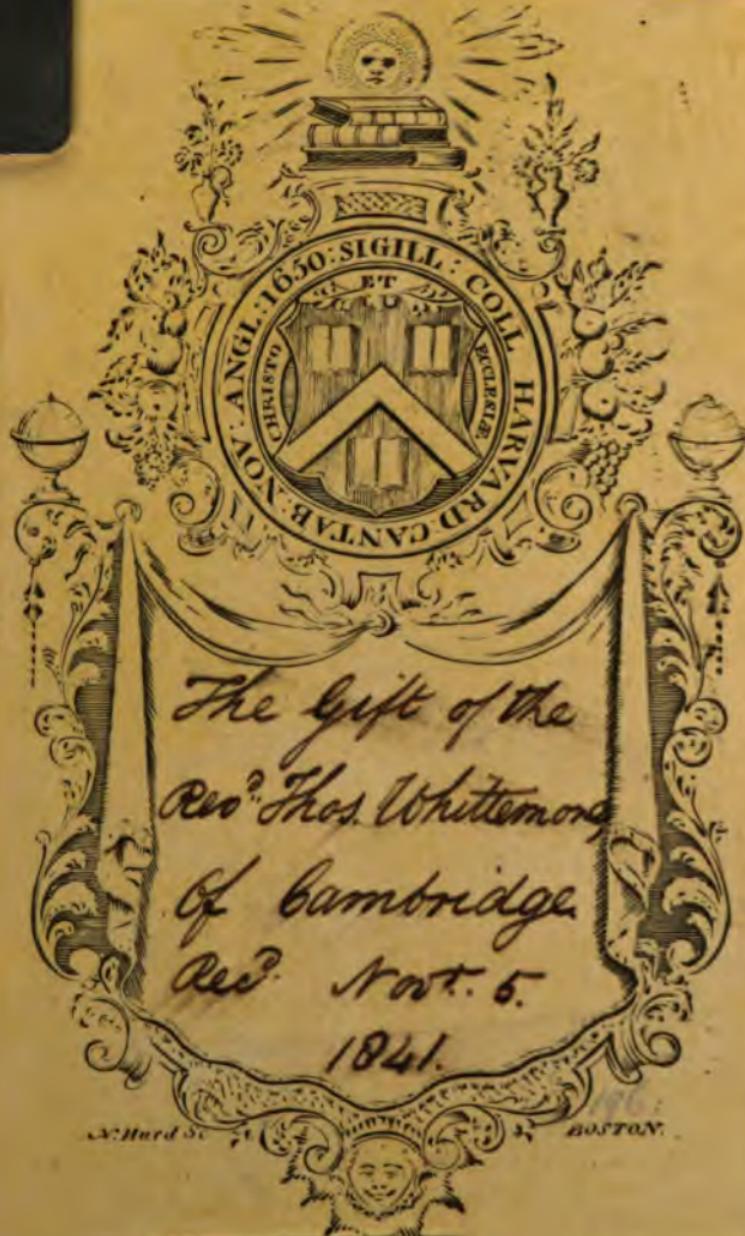
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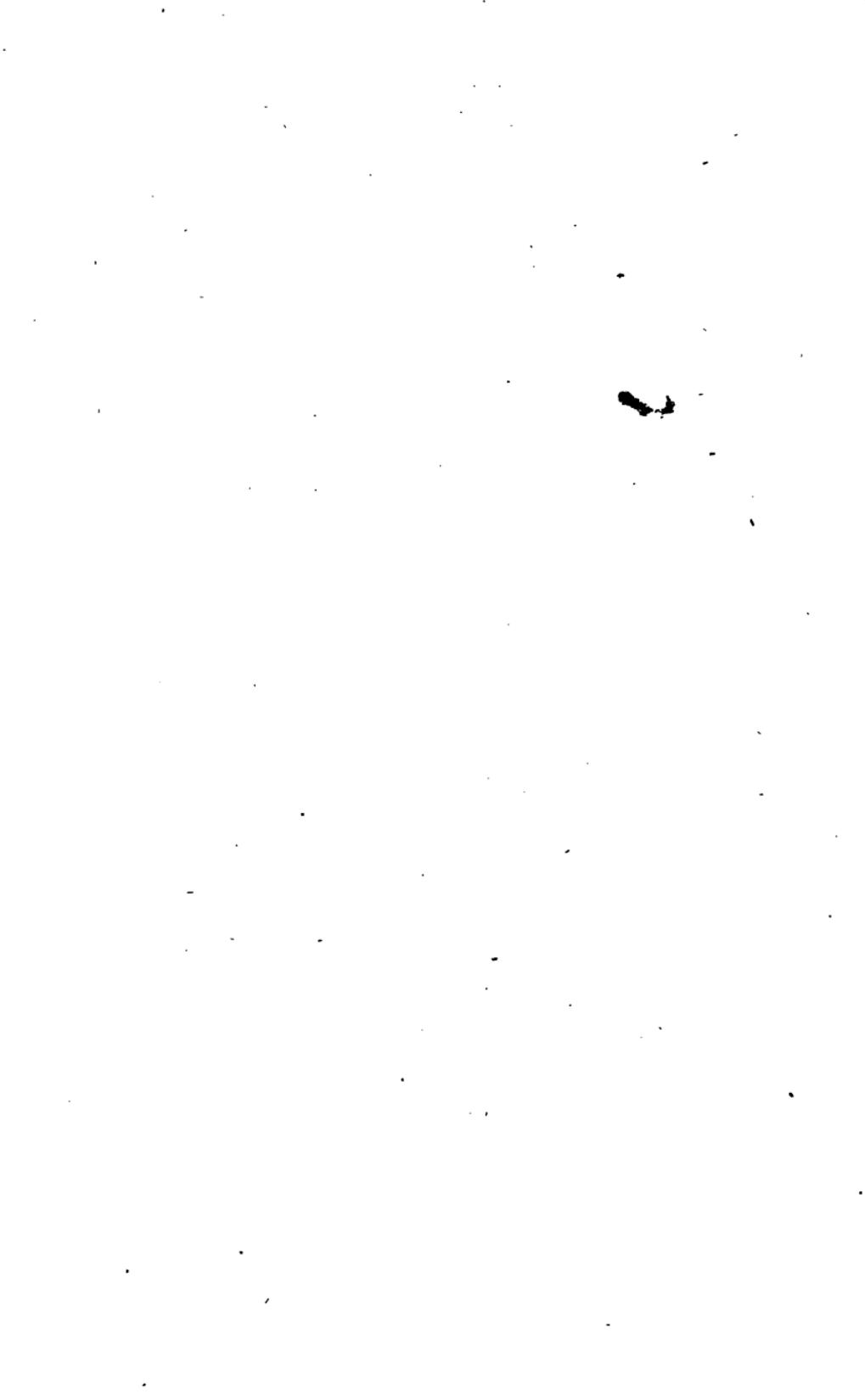
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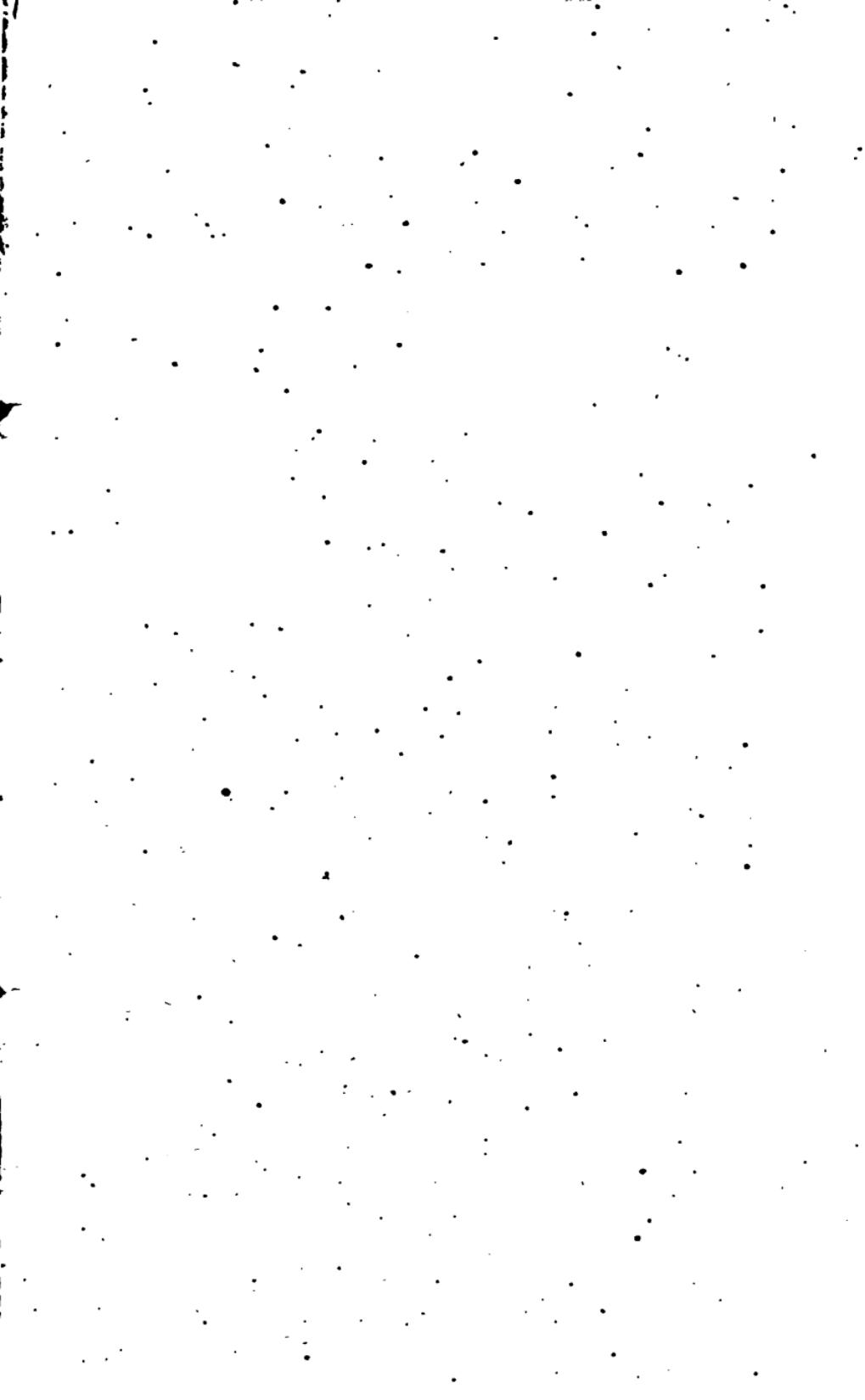


Thos Whitemore
to
Harvard College.



Thos Whitemore
to
Harvard College.







NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

P A R A B L E S

OF THE

N E W T E S T A M E N T,

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE TIME IN
WHICH THEY WERE SPOKEN.

By THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

Revised Edition.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, 40 CORNHILL.
1840

C1391.57.5

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Rev Thos Whittemore
of Cambridge

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1832, by
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H

DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. HOSEA BALLOU.

RESPECTED BROTHER:—Having brought the following work to a close, I am impelled, by a sense of my individual obligation to you, and of the debt of gratitude under which you have laid the Universalist community, by your long and unremitting services, to make this insufficient acknowledgment. When you was about my age, you made the Parables of the New Testament the subject of particular and careful study, and at that time produced your highly valuable work, which has since passed through repeated editions, and been very generally read by the religious denomination to which we belong. I am a humble follower in the path which you marked out. This work, on which I take the liberty to inscribe your name, was commenced before it came to my knowledge that you intended *revising* your own. I rejoice that you have bestowed on the *third* edition the fruit of your study and reflection, since its first appearance.

There will be found, respected Brother, a close agreement between our application of the Parables. The principal difference is this : I have brought forward, in defence of the views we entertain, the testimony of commentators of various denominations ; and I have endeavored to make the Parables better understood, and account for the imagery used in many of them, by a reference to the laws, customs and habits of the Eastern nations. I regret that I have not been able to attain this part of my object to a fuller extent.

In the hope that your valuable life and labors may be continued yet many years, I subscribe myself affectionately yours,

THOMAS WHITTEMORE.



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• P R E F A C E

TO THE REVISED EDITION.

THE first edition of this work having been taken up with a rapid sale, the author has been induced to revise and enlarge it, that he might increase its usefulness, and thereby carry into fuller effect the original purpose of its compilation. It has been his main object to attain the true sense and original application of the parables, which has been done, principally, by a careful study of the context in each case, and by a comparison of the terms and metaphors with the same terms and metaphors as used in other parts of the Scriptures. He hopes that, by this method, he has been successful in his attempts to develope the proper sense of the Sacred Writings, in those parts embraced in the design of this work.

The principal differences between this edition and the first, are as follows: The Introduction has been entirely added. It was thought not improper to introduce the work with a brief essay on the nature and use of parables,—the probable reasons why the Saviour adopted them in his method of instruction,—and the rules by which we should be governed in the interpretation. In this way the author has flattered himself that he has rendered a slight service to the order of Christians to which he belongs, and particularly to the young clergy of the denomination. Their increase has, of late, exceeded that

of any former period ; and we pray Heaven, that, as they grow in numbers, they may also ‘grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ We commend to their most serious study the character and doctrines of Jesus, and the method of instruction which he pursued with such singular success. May they remember, that ‘it is enough for the servant that he be as his master ;’ and may they, therefore, be induced to follow as closely as possible the examples which he has left us ; to preach and to practise his doctrines of impartial benevolence ; to illustrate, in a good life, as well as in a fine theory, the admirable tendency of his instructions ; and to devote themselves, as he did, in life, in powers, in every thing, to the cause of truth, and to the establishment of virtue and good will among men.

It will be seen that frequent reference is made, in this work, to the opinions of commentators ; and many extracts are given from their writings. The author would have it distinctly understood why he has adduced these authorities. In the first place, it is not because he has any desire to rest his faith on the authority of great names, or to induce others to do so ; nor is it because he prefers the wisdom of the world to the wisdom of God. Neither would he be suspected of wishing to obtain honor for the order of Christians to which he belongs, by representing the authors, from whom he has quoted, to have agreed with him, entirely, in sentiment. None of these reasons have moved him, but others of an entirely different character. In many cases he has adduced the testimony of these authors, because,

in fact, they disagreed with him on the great point of the salvation of mankind. Wherever, by the force of truth upon their minds, they have been constrained to make concessions favorable to the views of Scripture defended in this work, it is esteemed perfectly proper to adduce what they say,—and this for two reasons: 1st, to show, that against their prejudices, (for all men have prejudices,) and the bias of their avowed opinions, they were obliged, by the manifest propriety of the case, to adopt the interpretations which are herein given; and, 2d, that the reader may avail himself of their arguments and illustrations, many of which are unusually cogent, in deciding, in his own mind, what is truth. In the use of commentaries, this is as far as the author intended to go; nor does he consider himself laid under the least obligation, by this course, (as some have intimated) to adopt the opinions of the commentators on other subjects. He follows them where they are right—where they approve themselves to his judgment—where they sustain what they say by the principles of sound reason, and the unadulterated word of God; and he follows them no further. He respects them for their learning, and for their habits of study and industry; but he adopts as truth only what they render irrefragable by the testimony of the Bible. Those who wish to pursue the study of the commentators more generally than the following pages will enable them to do, are recommended to the very valuable work of Rev. L. R. Paige, entitled ‘Selections from Eminent Commentators,’ &c.

To render these pages as useful as possible, four full and very particular indexes have been appended. They

will, we trust, prove a useful auxiliary to the work, and save the reader much time and trouble in his references.

An attempt has been made to augment the value of this edition over the former, by the increased number of illustrations drawn from Eastern customs and laws. The author has himself derived much pleasure from this part of his studies, and he hopes they may administer somewhat to the entertainment and instruction of the reader. They must also have some effect in correcting the faith of the unfortunate unbelievers of the religion of Christ,—who, if they are sincerely in doubt after having examined the subject with the best helps in their power, are certainly entitled to our commisseration, and have a claim upon us that we do all that lies in our power to bring them to the enjoyment of the faith of Christ. By a reference to the customs and laws of the ancient Jews, and particularly to the Eastern nations of the present day, the Bible is clearly proved to be an Eastern book. The comparison will show that it is almost a moral impossibility it should be otherwise. Its antiquity is undeniable ; and it is, in every respect, such a work as we should conclude would come from the people and the times among whom and when it professes to have been written. What book of modern times is like it ? Who could now produce a book in any way like it, except by copying from it, or imitating it ? It evidently bears the marks of a distant age, and of a distant people. But by some, this circumstance is regarded as an evidence that it cannot be

genuine, and is, in fact, the cause of much of the ridicule which is unwittingly cast upon the Scriptures. Surely, if the Bible were perfectly suited to the taste of this age, in its style and language,—if we found every where a conformity to the refinement and effeminateness of the present manners, we might indeed suspect, that its claims to antiquity could be justly questioned. It brings with it, and will carry down with it to future generations forever, the impress of the people, through whom Divine Truth was committed to man.

The reader of this volume is most earnestly entreated to observe well the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. See that he labored for the good of others, and not for his own aggrandizement : see that he laid fairly before the eyes of men the perils and sacrifices consequent upon profession of his religion, while he was on earth, and never deceived them in this respect : see that he sought not the aid of the world—neither of the learned, nor the rich, nor the great—neither the power of law, nor of wealth : see that he chose fishermen for his disciples,—that he ate and drank with publicans and sinners,—that he addressed himself to the common people,—that he rebuked the vices of the higher classes with great freedom,—and that he was opposed by all the power, both of the Church, and of the State ; and then ask what it was that built up his religion immediately after his death, in the very place where he was crucified : see the simplicity of his commandments,—that they are all favorable to virtue,—that they re-

commend our living to do good; and then inquire, whether it can do men any injury if this religion prevail in its purity: see that the tendency of all his parables is in the highest degree salutary, recommending the duties of benevolence and mercy: see him at his death, putting in practice his own precepts, and praying for his murderers, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,’ and say whether he was not the SON OF GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word *parable* is derived from a Greek verb which signifies to compare things together, to form a parallel or similitude of them with other things; thence a parable is, as Dr. Johnson says, ‘a relation under which something else is figured.’ This is the sense in which the word parable occurs in the following work. The word is variously used in the Scriptures, to denote a *proverb* or short saying, (Luke iv. 23) where, in the original, the word is παραβολη; a *famous* or received *saying*, (1 Sam. x. 12; Ezek. xviii. 2;) a *thing* gravely spoken, and comprehending important matters in a few words (Job xxvii. 1; Numb. xxiii. 7, 18; xxiv. 3, 15; Psalms xl ix. 4; and lxxviii. 2;) a *thing* *darkly* or figuratively *expressed*, (Ezek. xx. 49; Matt. xv. 15;) a *visible type* or *emblem*, representing something different from and beyond itself, (Heb. ix. 9, and xi. 19;) a *special instruction*, (Luke xiv. 7;) and a *similitude* or *comparison*, (Matt. xxiv. 32; Mark iii. 23.)*

The Bible abounds in figures of speech of various kinds, especially the Old Testament. Some of its finest passages, are its astonishing hyperboles, and striking metaphors. ‘The early language of men being entirely composed of words descriptive of sensible objects, became, of necessity, extremely metaphorical. For to signify any desire or passion, or any act or feeling of the mind, they had no fixed expressions which were appropriated to that purpose, but were obliged to paint the emotion or passion which they felt, by alluding to those sensible objects which had most connexion with it, and which could render it in some degree visible to others. But it was not necessity alone which gave rise to this pictured style. In the infan-

* Horne’s Introduction, Littell’s ed. Phil. 1835, ii. 610.

cy of all societies, fear and surprise, wonder and astonishment, are the most frequent passions of men. Their language will necessarily be affected by this character of their minds. They will be disposed to paint everything in the strongest colors. Even the manner in which the first tribes of men uttered their words, had considerable influence on their style. Wherever strong exclamations, tones and gestures are connected with conversation, the imagination is always more exercised; a greater effort of fancy and passion is excited. Thus the fancy being kept awake and rendered more sprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon style, and gives it addition a life and spirit.'

Dr. Blair, from whom the above passage is taken, as one proof of the truth of these observations, transcribes a speech from Colden's History of the Five Indian Nations, which was delivered by their chiefs, while entering on a treaty of peace with the English government, in the following language: 'We are happy in having buried under ground the red axe, that has so often been dyed in the blood of our brethren. Now in this fort we inter the axe, and plant the tree of peace. We plant a tree whose top will reach the sun, and its branches spread abroad, so that it shall be seen afar off. May its growth never be stifled and choked; but may it shade both your country and ours with its leaves. Let us make fast its roots, and extend them to the uttermost of your colonies. If the French should come to shake this tree, we should know it by the motion of its roots reaching into our country. May the Great Spirit allow us to rest in tranquillity upon our mats, and never again dig up the axe to cut down the tree of peace. Let the earth be trodden hard over it where it lies buried. Let a strong stream run under the pit, to wash the evil away out of our sight and remembrance. The fire that had long burned in Albany is extinguished. The bloody bed is washed clean, and the tears are wiped from our eyes. We now renew the covenant chain of friendship. Let it be kept bright and clean as silver, and not suffered to contract any rust. Let not any one pull away his arm from it.' We have here an in-

stance of the ease with which nations in a state of infancy adopt the metaphorical style.

In accounting for the highly figurative style of the Scriptures, particularly of the Old Testament, writers have assigned two reasons: ‘One is, that the inhabitants of the East, naturally possessing warm and vivid imaginations, and living in a warm and fertile climate, surrounded by objects equally beautiful and agreeable, delight in a figurative style of expression; and as these circumstances easily impel their power of conceiving images, they fancy similitudes which are sometimes far-fetched, and which, to the chastened taste of European readers, do not always appear the most elegant. The other reason is, that many of the books of the Old Testament are poetical. Now it is the privilege of a poet to illustrate the productions of his muse, and to render them more animated, by figures and images drawn from almost every subject that presents itself to his imagination. Hence David, Solomon, Isaiah, and other sacred poets, abound with figures, make rapid transitions from one to another, everywhere scattering flowers, and adorning their poems with metaphors, the real beauty of which, however, can only be appreciated by being acquainted with the country in which the sacred poets lived, its situation and peculiarities, and also with the manners of the inhabitants and the idioms of their language.’* Jahn remarks, that the ancient Hebrew poetry is distinguished, in a number of particulars, from that of the western nations; that the metaphors and comparisons are more bold and unusual; and that the ornaments were derived from the state of things as they existed in the East, especially Palestine. Thus these ornaments are drawn from the natural objects of that region: from Lebanon and its cedars: from Carmel: from the oaks of Bashan: from the gardens, the vineyards and the forests, and from the animals: from the occupation of husbandmen and shepherds: from the history of the nations: from the manners exhibited in common life, even from its vices: from

* Horne’s Intro. ii. 581, 582.

oriental mythology, which, in a great degree, though not in all respects, corresponds with the Greek and Roman. Thus we find, for instance, mention made of the *chamber* of the sun, Psal. xix. 5, 6; but the orientals do not convey him on a chariot like the Greeks and Romans, but make him fly with wings, Psa. cxxxix. 9; Mal. iv. 2. The thunders are borne on chariots, but these chariots are not drawn by horses, but by cherubim, monsters that are symbolic of the clouds; Psal. xviii. 10; xcix. 1; Ezek. i. 2—28. We find frequent mention made by Isaiah of a golden age, when everything is to be peace; ii. 24; xi. 6—9; xxiv. 23; xxx. 24—28; lx. 19, 20; lxv. 9—25. The fancied infernal regions of the heathen are wrought into the metaphor; *hades* is moved, into which descend not only soldiers, warlike heroes and emperors, even all who die, but also, by a figure of speech, conquered nations and states, and even trees, the symbols of states. The warriors repose in this wide abode on couches, with their armor placed beneath their head; Isa. xiv. 9—20; Ezek. xxvi. 20; xxxi. 14—18; Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18; Luke x. 15. We find mention likewise of the rivers of hades; 2 Sam. xxii. 5; Psal. xviii. 4—6; and of a political heaven which can be shaken, and the moon and the stars thereof be obscured or cast down with great confusion, and overthrown. Isa. xxiv. 21—23; xxxiv. 4; lxv. 17; Hag. ii. 6, 21; Amos viii. 9, 10; Matt. xxiv. 29.*

The Old Testament is more noted for its sudden metaphors and bold prosopopoeias, than for lengthened parables and allegories, though the latter sometimes occur. We may instance Jotham's parable of the trees going forth to anoint a king; Judges ix. 8—15; Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb, 2 Sam. xii. 1—4; of the vineyard, Isa. v. 1—6; of the eagle and vine, Ezek. xvii. 1—10; and of the valley of dry bones; xxxvii. 1—14. From what has been said, it will be perceived that the Jews, above all the nations of antiquity, were familiar with the metaphorical method of instruction; and that the Saviour, in adopting

* See Jahn's *Archæology* Andover ed. of 1832. Sec. 91.

that method, did not introduce a new style, but followed one which they would all readily comprehend. Thus saith Dr. Lightfoot, ‘No scheme of Jewish rhetoric was more familiarly used than that of parables; and our Saviour (who always and everywhere spoke with the common people) used the same kind of speech, and very often the same preface, as they did in their parables, viz: “to what is it likened,” &c.* So saith the same author in another place, ‘Christ, speaking of parables, which he doth so exceeding much through the gospel, was according to the style and manner of that nation, which were exceedingly accustomed to this manner of rhetoric. The Talmuds are abundantly full of this kind of oratory, and so are generally all their ancient writers; and they commonly enter upon their parab’les with this preface, ‘A parable: to what is the thing like?’ which style Christ also useth not seldom. And sometimes they enter upon it more abruptly, with such an entrance as this, ‘To a man,’ or ‘to a king of flesh and blood, &c.’ I believe there are very many in the world, that have not been farther acquainted with the writings of the Jews, than what they have seen quoted by other writers, and yet are ready to censure them of lies or falsehoods (which indeed they are not free from) merely upon want of acquaintance with their style of parables and hyperboles.’†

From these remarks we may proceed to consider two things:

I. What object had the Saviour in view in speaking in parables? and

II. What are the general rules by which we should be governed in the explanation of parables?

* Works, xi. 203, 204. I invariably make my quotations from the edition of Lightfoot’s Works, by Rev. J. R. Pitman, London, 1825. Horne says, ‘The writings of Dr. Lightfoot are an invaluable treasure to the Biblical student. By his deep researches into the Rabbinical writings, he has done more to illustrate the phraseology of the Holy Scriptures, and to explain the various customs, &c., therein alluded to, particularly in the New Testament, than any other author before or since.’ Introduction, ii. 298.

† Works, iii. 82.

The parables of Christ differ somewhat in character and in object, and they were delivered to different classes of people. It may, we think, be remarked in general, that his object in the use of parables was to make truth plain to the understandings of those who were desirous of knowing it, and to apply its influence pungently and effectually to their hearts. Such an object was worthy of the Son of God, filled as he was with benevolence towards men, and laboring for the promotion of their highest welfare.

Our Lord probably adopted the parabolic method of instruction—

1. Because the Jews were familiar with that method. So says archbishop Newcomb. ‘Parables suited the turn and manner of the eastern nations, to the bulk of whom a train of reasoning would have appeared cold and lifeless, but who delighted in having their imaginations struck by the boldest figures and most glowing imagery.’*

2. Parables are an excellent method of giving counsel, of conveying unwholesome truth in the way the least calculated to give offence. Addison, renowned everywhere for fine writing, says, ‘If we look into the very beginning of the commonwealth of Rome, we see a mutiny among the common people appeased, by a fable of the belly and limbs, which was, indeed, very proper to gain the attention of an incensed rabble, at a time, when perhaps they would have torn to pieces a man, who should have preached the same doctrine to them, in an open and direct manner. * * * * If we look into the finest prose writers of antiquity, such as Cicero, Plato, Xenophon, and many others, we shall find that this was likewise their favorite kind of fable. I shall only farther observe upon it, that the first of this sort, that made any considerable figure in the world, was that of Hercules meeting with *pleasure* and *virtue*; which was invented by Prodicus, who lived before Socrates, and in the first dawning of philosophy. He used to travel through Greece by virtue of this fable; which

* Observations, Charlestown ed. of 1810, pp. 151, 152.

procured him a kind reception in all the market towns, where he never failed telling it, as soon as he had gathered an audience about him.* The moral lessons enforced in this parable, were received with much more favor, and had a vastly greater effect, than if they had been given in a formal manner.

3. By the use of parables our Lord was enabled to administer a more pointed rebuke than he could have given in any other way; he, in this manner, made people pass judgment against their own conduct,— before they were aware it was themselves they condemned; and thus, in the application, he caused them to stand reprobated in the sight of their own consciences. Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb, (2 Sam. xii. 1—4;) had this effect in a wonderful degree. He had described king David's conduct in such a way that the king forgot himself, and gave an impartial judgment: 'As the Lord liveth,' said he, 'the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.' When the prophet responded to him, '*Thou art the man*,' the reproof must have gone like an arrow through his heart, and made him tremble under the consciousness of his own sins. By the parable of the two debtors, Luke vii. 41, 42, Simon, the self-righteous Pharisee, who marvelled that Jesus should permit a woman who was a sinner to touch him, was led to see that he himself was the greater sinner of the two, and in effect to acknowledge it. The reproof was administered before he saw what the Saviour's object was—the light burst out upon him before he had time to close his eyes; but had the Saviour commenced by saying, 'Simon, I am about to convince you that you are even more wicked than a harlot, and publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you, he would not have supposed the thing possible, and would have turned away in disgust and anger. The same effect is seen to follow the parable of the good Samaritan. It was proposed to a bigoted Jew,

* Spectator, No. 183.

self-confident in his supposed knowledge of the moral injunctions of God's law. He believed that the Jews only were his neighbors, whom he was bound to love. But after Jesus had uttered the parable, and asked him who was neighbor to him who fell among thieves, he was obliged to confess that it was he who had mercy on him. By this he condemned himself, for he had always lived in hatred of the Samaritans, while at the same time he professed to have obeyed the law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' I must here be indulged with making another extract from the Spectator.* 'Among all the different ways of giving council, I think the finest, and that which pleases the most universally, is fable or parable, in whatever shape it appears. If we consider this way of instructing, or giving advice, it excels all others, because it is the least shocking, and the least subject to those exceptions which I have before mentioned. This will appear to us, if we reflect, in the first place, that upon reading or hearing a fable or parable, we are made to believe we advise ourselves. We attend to the speaker, or peruse the author, for the sake of the story; and consider the doctrine, or precept, rather as our own conclusion, than his instruction. The moral insinuates itself imperceptibly. We are taught by surprise, and become wiser and better unawares. In short, by this method, a man is so far overreached, as to think he is instructing or directing himself, while he is following the dictates of another. And consequently is not sensible of that which is the most unpleasing circumstance in advice.'

4. Several of Christ's parables were designed to show forth the truth *more clearly*, to reduce it to the capacity of the meanest mind, and, by the aid of the simplest and most common objects, to cause it to be fully understood. It is said, Mark iv. 33, 'And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, *as they were able to hear it.*' Compare John xvi. 12. 25. Erasmus, † with his usual spirit and elegance, commends Christ's teaching the peo-

* No. 512.

† Paraphrase on Mark iv. 2.

ple by parables. ‘Christ proposed parables,’ said he, ‘that is, similitudes taken from things the most known. For this is the most simple kind of teaching and best accommodated to the rude and ignorant, though at first view it seems, to the wise men of this world, to be childish and ridiculous. But this manner of teaching pleased Eternal Wisdom. The philosophers, by syllogisms twisted together with great art, poured darkness upon the minds of their hearers. The rhetoricians, with an admirable copiousness of speech, roused the minds of men. The Pharisees heaped together some things that were abstruse, and far removed from the capacity of the vulgar. But Jesus chose this kind of reasoning by parables, which is most simple, and quite free from all ostentation; that all the glory of this world’s being renewed by the gospel, might be ascribed to a divine force and efficacy. Therefore, with many parables he roused their souls; that with simple belief, and pure minds, they might receive the evangelical doctrine, from whence cometh the beginning of our salvation.’ The words of Jerome are worthy to be repeated here. He says upon Matt. xiii., ‘It is a common thing with the Syrians, and especially with the people of Palestine, to every discourse of theirs to join parables; that what the hearers cannot lay hold of by a simple precept, may be laid hold of and retained by similitude and example.’ Solomon says, ‘*A fool uttereth all his mind,*’ that is imprudently, ‘*but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards,*’ till he sees some prospect of doing good by his disclosures. Dr. Benson remarks, very justly, ‘If a person, with weak eyes, was long shut up in a dark room, to open the windows all at once and let in the blazing light of the meridian sun, would give him pain, and force him to shut his eyes, so as not to be able to see at all, instead of receiving the light with pleasure and joy. He that would fill a very narrow-mouthed vessel, must not pour in liquor suddenly and all at once. That would be the way to overturn it, and so not fill it at all. But if he takes time, uses patience, and pours in the liquor drop by drop, or by gentle degrees, he may then fill it completely. Now, the multitude have weak

eyes, and are narrow-mouthed vessels. This is the case with the generality of mankind. They have not been used to think much or freely, to argue closely, or so much as to suspect that possibly they may be mistaken. A sudden attack upon the principles in which they have been educated, however false, or groundless, is not to be endured, no more than a blunt and direct reproof of their practice, however foolish, or criminal.*

5. It was proper for Christ to speak in parables, sometimes as a necessary screen from the malice of his enemies. The chief priests, and the Scribes and Pharisees would not have failed to take advantage of any express declaration which they might turn to his destruction. (John x. 24.) But yet they could not lay hold of the most pointed parables, which they were clear-sighted enough to perceive were levelled against themselves. See Matt. xxi. 45 ; Mark xii. 12 ; and Luke xx. 19.†

6. Jesus spoke in parables, on one occasion at least, because it was not consistent to declare certain truths plainly to those who were determined not to see nor hear. In the parable of the Sower, (Matt. xiii. 3-8,) he shows the manner in which the word of the gospel would be received by the different classes of men : When preached to some, it would be like seed sown by the way side, which the fowls devoured ; to others, like seed sown in stony places ; to others, like seed sown among thorns, which sprung up and choked it. Here the blindness, sensuality, and obstinacy of the Jews are described. Their hearts were waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes they had closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and should be healed. It would effect no good to declare truth plainly to such people, any more than to hold up a beautiful picture before the eyes of a statue. But by a parable, to which they might unsuspectingly be inclined to listen, the truth spoken of was shown them in disguise,

* Life of Christ, 251.

† Horne's Intro. ii. 618.

veiled by a thin covering, or under a similitude, which would assist them in understanding it, if they really had the desire to understand it, and exasperate them the less if they would not understand.

It has been supposed by some, particularly those who have adopted the doctrine of reprobation to eternal death, that our Lord intentionally hid the truth from the Jews, lest they should see; and thereby kept those in darkness who otherwise would have received willingly the light of truth. I would decide with diffidence touching a subject on which the wisest theologians have differed. But I think there is some force in the reply of Adam Clarke to this supposition: ‘Who that is not most miserably warped and begloomed by some Jewish exclusive system of salvation, can suppose that the wise, the benevolent and holy Christ, would employ his time in speaking enigmatically to the people, on purpose that they might not understand what was spoken. Could the God of truth and sincerity act thus? If he had designed that they should continue in darkness, he might have saved his time and labor, and not spoken at all, which would as effectually have answered the same purpose, viz. that of leaving them in destructive ignorance.’* The view which Clarke opposes in this passage, has been founded on Isa. vi. 9, 10. But bishop Lowth maintains that the prophet is speaking only of ‘the event, of the fact as it would actually happen. The prophets are in other places said to perform the thing which they only foretel.

“Lo I have given thee a charge this day,
Over the nations and over the kingdoms;
To pluck up and to pull down,
To destroy and to demolish;
To build and to plant.”—JER. i. 10.

And Ezekiel says, “When I came to destroy the city,” that is, as it is rendered in the margin of our versions, “when I came to prophecy that the city should be destroyed.”—Ch. xlivi. 3.

I will here give a few hints, which may perhaps lead to a better understanding of Isaiah vi. 9, 10, as quoted by

* Remarks at the end of Matt. xiii.

Christ. See Matt. xiii. 11—17; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40.

1. I suppose Jesus to have applied the words of the prophet to the Jews in his day, who were, in fact, ‘self-willed,’ ‘willingly ignorant,’ and who shut their eyes against the light.

2. The Jews had been peculiarly obstinate at the time the parable of the Sower was spoken. They had accused Christ of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils, Matt. xii. 24; by which we see they knew he had performed a miracle, but would not confess that he came from God. He shows them, xii. 40—42, that they were more obstinate than the heathen, for the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but they had heard a greater than Jonah and had not repented; and the Queen of the south came from afar to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but a greater than Solomon had come to them, and they would not hear. Jesus, therefore, spoke the parable of the Sower, to show that their rejecting the truth was not the fault of his gospel, which he compared to good seed; for the reason the seed did not grow, was not because it was bad in itself, for that which was sown in good ground did grow; but because the hearts of the Jews were hard, like the earth by the way side, and filled with errors and sins, like a field covered with thorns.

3. It was not the design of the parable of the Sower to set forth the doctrines of the gospel, but the hardness of heart, and worldly mindedness of the Jews, and the reasons why some even who professed the religion of Christ, should fall away. By showing this in a parable, it exasperated the enemies of Christ the less, and was equally productive of benefit to others.

4: What is said in Matt. xiii. 11—15, and the parallel passages in the other evangelists, we are not under the necessity of understanding as having application to the parables of Christ generally, but to the parable of the Sower only, as those passages are never connected with any other parable.

5. The parable of the Sower made the subject sufficient-

ly plain to those who earnestly sought the truth, and was therefore a better way of communicating truths to a mixed multitude, many of whom were determinately ignorant, and had closed their eyes, than a formal declaration of it. Besides, if any did not understand, Jesus was ready to explain his meaning to them, upon their requesting it, as he did to his disciples, Mark iv. 10. ‘It was the custom of the disciples of the Jewish doctors,’ says Whitby, ‘when they understood not the meaning of their parables, to go unto their Rabbins to inquire the meaning of them; as did our Lord’s disciples ask of him the meaning of those parables they understood not. And this, Christ’s hearers might have done, had they not been indisposed to receive the doctrines which he taught, and chosen rather to be held in error by the Scribes and Pharisees, than to receive instruction from the mouth of Christ.’*

6. The language in Matt. xiii. 11—15 accords with the view here taken, viz. that this parable would assist the Jews to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, if they were so disposed. Like other parables, it was designed to assist the uninstructed understanding; but unlike a plain and literal declaration of facts, it left the Jews in utter ignorance, if they had not teachable dispositions, nor a desire to discover the truth. ‘The disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given;’ they therefore need the familiar, the parabolic style more than you, because they have not the same advantages. ‘For whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance;’ you, my disciples, had teachable dispositions, and to you knowledge was given, and you had abundance: ‘but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath;’ those who have little or no desire to learn, shall lose their opportunities of improvement, and their little knowledge shall vanish. ‘Therefore speak I to them

* Com. on Matt. xiii. 10.

in parables, because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand;' I speak to them in parables because they are blind, and deaf, and without understanding; if they wish to learn, the parable will assist them to know the truth; but if they are determinately blind, it will leave them in the same palpable state of ignorance; and is a method of instruction, therefore, more becoming a reasonable teacher, who studies only to address the understanding. 'And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and I should heal them:' as if he had said, This will be the event notwithstanding my instructions; they will not hear, they will not perceive, 'their eyes have they closed.' Mark has it, 'Unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven,' iv. 11, 12. Christ was ready to instruct them, and they would not. Mark here describes the event that followed the declaration of the parable, not meaning that the parable had the effect to make them blind, for it could not have had such an effect, as it was a beautiful and instructive allegory. To interpret the language of the evangelist as of Christ's *end* and *design* in speaking the parable, is utterly inconsistent with his whole system of metaphorical instruction, which was always intended to illustrate truth, and press it forcibly upon the understanding. This was the design of the Old Testament parables, and is so in fact of all parables in all languages. For this main reason any interpretation is to be admitted, before that which makes Christ speak parables in order that the people might not understand. He labored earnestly, to convert the Jews, declaring that he would have gathered them as a hen

gathereth her chickens under her wings, *but they would not*.—(Matt. xxiii. 37.) He wept over them, and lamented that they had not known the things that belonged to their peace, before it was too late, (Luke xix. 41, 42.) Was not this solemn mockery, if he himself had connived at their blindness, and intentionally hidden these things from their eyes?

II. What are the general rules by which we should be governed in the explanation of parables? There are several rules which, we believe, the student will always find it to his advantage to follow.

First, he should observe the *nature of a parable*, and remember that he is not to rest in the fable itself, but look beyond it for the moral instruction, or application, as the ultimate end, which is of much more importance than the mere imagery, however beautiful, remarkable, or engaging. Thus says Benson, ‘In reading fables, children are commonly delighted with the story: grown persons and wise men look farther. They inquire after the *moral*. They want to know what instruction is conveyed; or what useful lesson they can learn from the narration.’*

2. I have always found it an advantage to search diligently the context to ascertain the design of a parable. For instance, to some parables a declaration is prefixed, or postfixed, which points out the general scope. The parable of the man who doated on riches is prefaced by the following caution, (Luke xii. 15:) ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,’ a sentiment which the parable is designed to illustrate. So the parable of the unjust judge is preceded by this expression; ‘He spake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray and not to faint,’ (Luke xviii. 2—8;) which very clearly shows the design of the parable. To the parable of the unforgiving servant this passage is subjoined,—‘So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.’ This plainly shows what the parable was intended for. The

* Life of Christ, 272.

nineteenth chapter of Matthew closes with these words, 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.' To show how this was to be fulfilled, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard was spoken, which most clearly and forcibly, and in a very interesting manner, sets it forth; and hence the application is subjoined to the parable, xx. 16, 'So the last shall be first and the first last.' Frequently, by consulting the context, where there is no direct declaration of the design, it will not be difficult to penetrate it, by considering the circumstances under which the parable is spoken, the character of the persons to whom it is addressed, and that part of their conduct which would be the most likely to meet the Saviour's attention, either as a subject of his approbation, or disapprobation.

3. Make yourself acquainted with eastern customs, particularly the customs of the Jews, and also with the historical facts related or alluded to in the parable. This is very essential. Scarcely a parable can be understood without the knowledge here spoken of. 'Whoever would understand a parable thoroughly,' says Benson, 'and see the force, beauty and propriety of the moral or application, ought to be well acquainted with the narrative part, the customs or historical facts related or alluded to in the parable.* Three or four of the most prominent parables in the New Testament are founded upon the customs of Jewish weddings, and cannot be understood at all without a knowledge of those customs. The whole energy of the parable of the good Samaritan, depends on our knowledge of the enmity of the Jews to the Samaritans, which was carried to such an extent that it is recorded, (John iv. 9,) 'The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.' The wounded man is intentionally represented as a Jew, and the Samaritan proves himself a neighbor to him, as though he was a person of another nation. How little can we understand of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, unless we know the opinions

* Life of Christ, p. 268.

which prevailed among the Jews and heathen at the time Christ was on the earth, concerning their imaginary *hades*, divided into *paradise* and *tartarus*, and the fictions they entertained concerning the state of departed shades there. The parables of the Winnowing Fan, the Sower, and the Tares of the Field are founded on the agricultural customs of the Jews, and may be explained with much more clearness by those who have studied these customs.

4. The scope of the parable is to be chiefly regarded, and not the words taken severally.* ‘The moral, or application, the grand design, or useful intention of a parable, is not to be learned from single phrases, or incidental circumstances; but from the main scope and design of the parable taken together.’† Chrysostom, as quoted by the same author, says, ‘We ought not to lay too much stress upon single words and phrases. But, when we have learned the scope and design of the parable, we need not be anxious about any thing but the moral or useful instruction, principally intended thereby.’ Dr. Campbell says again, ‘Smaller matters are considered only as a sort of drapery. Thus, in the parable of the prodigal, all the characters and chief incidents are significant, and can scarcely be misunderstood by an attentive reader; but to attempt to assign a separate meaning to *the best robe*, and *the ring*, and *the shoes*, and *the fatted calf*, and *the music*, and *the dancing*, betrays great want of judgment, as well as puerility of fancy.’‡ It was a favorite maxim of Maimonides, ‘Fix it as a principle to attach yourself to the grand object of the parable, without attempting to make a particular application of all the circumstances and terms which it comprehends.’ We refer the reader to an excellent article on this subject, in the ‘Expositor and Universalist Review,’ for March, 1833.

Benson says, at once in a popular style and forcible manner, ‘A knife may carve meat, cut bread and other things, with the edge, though not with the back, or the

* Campbell’s Four Gospels. Note on Matt. xiii. 3.

† Benson’s Life of Christ, p. 272.

‡ Four Gos. Note on Matt. xiii. 3. Also Horne’s Intro. ii. 613.

handle. And yet the back and handle are useful in their places; though the edge alone is usually employed in cutting things asunder. In like manner, in parables, there are circumstances thrown in, for ornament, or decoration, to make the story connect, or hang well together, which do not immediately relate to the moral, or designed application. It is commonly and justly said, that *similitudes do not run upon all four*: that is, comparisons do not hold quite throughout, nor tally in every circumstance. The same thing may be observed with respect to parables. *They do not run upon all four.* They do not preserve a similitude in every circumstance, and quite throughout. And as this was not intended, one cannot argue, justly and solidly, from every word, or sentence, from every phrase, or incidental circumstance. It is not sufficient, in point of argument, how prettily an observation may be raised from the words, how handsome an occasion they may give to a man of lively fancy, or warm imagination, who can moralize, with great facility upon any occasion, or upon no occasion, and greatly entertain the multitude, who love to be amused with what is superficial, rather than instructed with solid arguments, and well-grounded interpretations. But cool heads and judicious persons are not so easily carried away.'

Again, says the same author, ‘It is said our Lord will come to judgment *like a thief in the night*. But we have no reason to carry the comparison so far as to conclude from thence that he will come to rob or murder, though thieves in the night commonly come with such bad views. The single point intended by that comparison is, that he will come suddenly and surprisingly upon a wicked world, when they are least of all apprehensive of his coming, or least prepared for it. So reason teaches us to limit that expression. If a spear cut with the point, or a knife with the edge, it is enough. Now parables have one point, one edge, one useful lesson, one moral or practical application. And that is all that we are concerned with. A musical instrument is not all string, nor a spear all point, nor a knife all edge. “A parable and the moral,” says a most

judicious author, ‘are not like two plains, that touch in every point, but like a globe laid upon a plain, which touches in one point only! Our Lord commended the unjust steward, *because he had done wisely*; he acted with a proper care and foresight to secure the point which he had in view. And there is nothing said through that whole parable, to condemn the fraud and injustice. That our Lord left to the reason and common sense of his hearers, to his well-known character, and to the general scope and design of his doctrine ; and whoever took in all these, would never imagine that Jesus designed to commend fraud and injustice.*

5. When we have ascertained the proper signification of a parable, the applications which the author intended, we should rest satisfied, and not attempt to find a double sense, as though it were to have several applications. Each parable of Christ has a single object, and when that is gained the whole intent of the parable is gained. We frequently find, however, violations of this rule, notwithstanding its manifest propriety. Thus Adam Clarke applies the parable of the Tares and the Wheat to two events: 1st, to the Jewish state and people at the end of the Jewish polity, and 2d, to the consummation of all things. The former he allows to be its *primary* sense. By *primary* sense he must mean the sense that Christ affixed to it; and surely it cannot be contended that Christ used it in *two senses*, since, in his explanation, he gave no intimation to that effect. The *primary* sense, therefore, is the sense Christ put upon it, and is the true sense; and any other sense is to be received only as the effect of human fancy and prejudice. Dr. Proudfit has embraced the error here referred to in its utmost extremes. Speaking of the parable of the Barren Fig Tree, he says, ‘Although this parable has an *immediate* reference to the Jewish nation during the ministry of our Lord, and their future destruction, yet it *may be* considered as referring to the gospel church, or to the professors of religion in all ages. The parables, like the prophecies of Scripture, frequently admit of a *two-fold* application.

* Life of Christ, pp. 273, 275.

They relate to some particular object *immediately* in view, or to some event shortly to be accomplished, and *through these* they contemplate another object more general, and another event to take place in a different country or distant age. Although the parable under present consideration *immediately respected the posterity of Abraham, their exalted privileges under the ministry of our Lord*, and their final rejection as his *peculiar* people, yet it *remotely* points to all nations in all ages under a pure dispensation of the gospel.* Now this is altogether assumption on the part of the Dr. He does not furnish a particle of proof that what he says is correct. If we may be permitted to affix a sense to a parable different from its proper, original sense, where then shall we stop? Within what bounds shall we be confined? If we acknowledge the justness of such a rule, do we not expose the Scriptures to the grossest and most ridiculous perversions? Then every man's fancy and prejudice will be his guide, and the strangest doctrines will be palmed upon the word of God. Then the unquestionable meaning of Jesus will be set down as the *primary* signification of the parable, which divines who contend for the *two-fold* sense have generally regarded as of the smaller concern, and each one shall make out a *secondary* sense, according to his own conceits and desires. It should be thought enough for us to ascertain the mind of Christ: let the same mind be in us that was in him. If we shall receive what truth he intended to communicate, we shall do well, we shall be well furnished unto every good work. We must abide by the 'law and the testimony; for if we speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in us.' He who is 'wise above what is written,' is foolish; he may be 'wise in his own conceit,' but he has not true wisdom. True wisdom consists in going to the word of God to learn what it reveals; and when once we have ascertained its true and proper sense, to abide by it without any deviation. For this reason we recommend a rule in regard to the parables, which we believe to be of vital importance to a just inter-

* Lectures on Parables. pp. 136, 137.

pretation, viz: when we have found the proper signification, to rest satisfied, and affix no additional sense.

Professor Stuart, of the Andover Theological Institution, has very pointedly condemned the practice of affixing a *double* sense to the Scriptures. ‘The consequences of admitting such an opinion,’ says he, ‘should be well weighed. What book on earth has a double sense, unless it is a book of designed enigmas? And even this has but one real meaning. If a *literal* sense, and an *occult* sense, can at the same time and by the same words be conveyed, who that is uninspired can tell us what the occult sense is? By what laws of interpretation is it to be judged? By none that belong to human language; for other books than the Bible have not a double sense attached to them. For these and the like reasons, the scheme of attaching a double sense to the Scriptures is inadmissible. It sets afloat all the fundamental principles of interpretation, by which we arrive at established conviction and certainty, and casts us upon the boundless ocean of imagination and conjecture, without rudder or compass.’* On the same subject the reader may consult the following excellent paragraph, from a high orthodox work. ‘The contending interpretations which are afloat upon the subject of prophecy, induce me to suggest the inquiry, whether every passage of the sacred writings, like all other writings, is not intended to have *one, and but one* fixed and definite signification. Is there any declaration in Scripture which warrants us in believing that the same passage has two or three meanings; that expressions are, in fact, used equivocally; that two distinct senses may be given to a text, and yet both be true? We, in our ignorance, may doubt whether a passage is meant to be literal or figurative; whether it is historical or prophetical; whether it refers to the type or the antitype; whether it embraces temporal or spiritual judgments or mercies; but ought we to doubt whether the Holy Ghost expressed one clear or precise idea? And may we not dishonor his words, when we construe them in two or three meanings?’†

* Com. on Heb.

† Christian Observer.



PARABLE OF THE AXE.

Matthew iii. 10. Luke iii. 9.

'And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.'—Matt. iii. 10.

THIS figure occurs in an address made by John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism. (Matt. iii. 7.) He rebuked them severely for their wickedness, calling them a 'generation of vipers,' and inquired who had warned them to flee from the wrath to come.' This latter expression has by some been supposed to have reference to a judgment in the future state of existence; but all the best commentators, as well as the context itself, forbid such an application. That celebrated critic, Dr. George Campbell, who believed in a *future judgment*, objected to the phrase, 'wrath to come,' because it appeared to limit the sense to that judgment: he chose, therefore, to use the expression, 'the impending vengeance.' The Greek word in this instance, he adds, 'often means not only *future*, but *near*. There is just such a difference between *σταυ* and *μελλει στασθαι*, in Greek, as there is between *it will be* and *it is about to be*, in English.' The obvious sense is, the *wrath about to come*, or more briefly, the *impending vengeance*.*

Adam Clarke takes the same view. He says the *wrath to come* was 'the desolation about to fall on the Jewish nation for their wickedness, and threatened in the last words of their Scriptures. (See Mal. iv. 6.) 'Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.' This wrath or curse was coming: they did not prevent it by turning to God

* Note on the passage.

and receiving the Messiah, and therefore the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost.*

These views agree with that of the celebrated Dr. Lightfoot, a divine of undoubted orthodoxy, who was one of the famous Westminster Assembly. He says of the phrase ‘wrath to come,’ ‘In this speech John seemeth to refer to the last words in all the Old Testament; where Malachi, prophesying of the Baptist, and of his beginning to preach the gospel, *he shall turn, saith he, the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* This meaneth that wrath to come which should surely fall upon them, if they should disobey the gospel, which was now the last means offered them for their conversion. And so it came to pass with them, when, about forty-four years after this, they were destroyed by the Romans.’†

Bishop Pearce, a distinguished commentator of the church of England, says, that ‘the *wrath to come* is the punishment to come in the destruction of the Jewish state.’‡ Dr. Hammond, gives it the same interpretation.§

Dr. Gill too, though we should hardly expect it, gives his authority in favor of the same explanation. By ‘wrath to come,’ says he, ‘is not meant hell fire, everlasting destruction, from which baptism could not save them; but temporal calamity and destruction, the wrath which in a little time came upon that nation to the uttermost.’|| The modern author, Kenrick, observes unequivocally, ‘The impending punishment in the destruction of the Jewish state, I suppose to be referred to by the ‘*wrath to come*.’¶

After the interrogation which John addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees, he calls upon them to ‘bring forth fruits meet for repentance;’ that is, if they were really the

* Comment. on New Tes. in Matt. iii. 7.

† Works, iv. 264.

‡ Comment. on the place.

§ Paraphrase and Annot. on the place.

|| Expos. of New Tes. on the place.

¶ Expos. on the place.

subjects of repentance, they ought to evince it by their conduct. He cautions them not to depend too much on their descent from the patriarch Abraham; for God was able, even from inanimate things, to raise up children unto Abraham; ver. 9. They, therefore, were neither the better nor the worse, for being the children of Abraham. That circumstance would not save them in the day of trouble. The Jews were not only proud of their ancestry, but they seem to have relied upon it for safety in times of public danger and calamity; as though Abraham, the faithful, the friend of God, would not see his children suffer, without granting relief. Hence the rich man, in the parable, (Luke xvi. 24,) is represented as calling on Abraham as his father, and begging his intercession to alleviate his sufferings. John was aware of their habit in this respect; and he beseeches them not to think themselves of any greater consideration because they were the children of Abraham; for God was able of the stones on the banks of Jordan to raise up children unto Abraham.*

* Let it be noticed here, once for all, that the Jews gloried exceedingly in being the children of Abraham, and trusted in their affinity to the patriarch to save them from divine judgment. 'We be Abraham's seed,' said they to Christ, 'and were never in bondage to any man.' (John viii. 33, 53.) Dr. Lightfoot gives an instance of the same national vanity. 'It is storied of R. Jochan au Ben Matthias, that he said to his son, Go out, and hire us some laborers.' He went out and hired them for their victuals. When he came home to his father, his father said to him, 'My son, though thou shouldest make feasts for them, as gaudy as the feasts of Solomon, thou wouldest not do enough for them, because they are the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' (Works xii. 321.) Dr. Whitby says on Luke xvi. 24, 'As the Baptists taxeth their vain imaginations in hoping to be preserved from divine judgment whilst they lived, because they were the children of Abraham, (Matt. iii. 9, so our Lord here may strike at a vain imagination got among them.) Again, Whitby says in another place, 'they thought it sufficient to obtain God's favor, and to secure them from his judgment, that they were of the seed of Abraham. The Chaldee Paraphrasts do often mention their expectation of being preserved for the merits or good works of their forefathers, &c.' (Com on Rom. ii. 13.) The modern expositor Kenrick has a valuable note. 'The Jews valued themselves highly on account of their relation to their ancestor Abraham, for whose sake they supposed themselves secure of the divine favor, and safe from danger as a nation. It is the object of John the Baptist therefore, as it was afterward of Jesus Christ, and the apostle Paul, to remove from

To show them that the destruction of the nation was at hand, and that it should be thorough, John says, ‘And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.’ Here we have the metaphor of *the axe*, of the *trees*, and of hewing down the trees, and casting them into the fire. Now, to understand the true application of these metaphors, the best way is to have recourse to the Old Testament.

1. Of the *axe*. In 2 Sam. xii. 31, and 1 Chron. xx. 3, we find the following language: ‘And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under *axes* of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln; and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.’ This is a description of the severe afflictions which the children of Israel visited upon their conquered enemies. (Isa. x. 15:) ‘Shall the *axe* boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up; or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.’ Compare verses 5, 6, 12—14, whence you may gather the sense here. The king of Assyria was the ‘rod of God’s anger, the staff of his indignation,’ and the axe with which he hewed down the nations. But he grew proud, and attributed his success to the strength of his own hand, the power of his own wisdom. Hence, says the prophet, shall *the axe* boast itself? &c. The enemies of Babylon, who overthrew that great city, are

their minds this ill-founded pride and hope of impunity, which was the greatest obstacle to the cultivation of right dispositions, and to all reformation of manners, telling them they were by no means so secure of continuing the peculiar people of God as they imagined; for that God was able to raise children to Abraham, from the most inanimate parts of nature—as he had already raised seed to him from one as good as dead; and that he would rather do so than show favor to them while they continued to disobey his laws. In these words there may be an allusion to the call of the Gentiles, who, by their faith and obedience, should deserve to be called the children of Abraham, but from whom the Jews would expect those virtues no sooner than from stocks and stones.’ (Expos. Matt. iii. 9.)

thus described by the Lord of hosts : ‘ Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war ; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms,’ &c. &c. (See Jer. li. 19—24.) It is evident from this, that it was the custom of the Old Testament authors, when God employed the army of one nation to punish thereby another rebellious nation, to describe that army as an instrument in his hand, for the execution of his will,—as his *axe* with which to hew, his staff with which to break, his rod with which to chastise.

2. Of the trees, and of *hewing down the trees*. The destruction of Egypt is described by Jeremiah in the following language. (Jer. xlvi. 22, 23.) ‘ They shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord.’ The fall of Assyria is described in the same manner by Ezekiel. ‘ The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature ; and his top was among the thick boughs. * * * * Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, —Because thou hast listed up thyself in height; and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is listed up in his height ; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen ; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness And as strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him ; upon the mountains and in all the vallies his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land ; and all people of the earth are gone down with his shadow, and have left him.’ (Ezek. xxxi. 10, 12. See the whole of the chapter.) Isaiah also says, ‘ Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts shall lop the bough with terror ; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall be a mighty one.’ (Isa. x. 33, 34.)

3. Of casting them into *the fire*. Nothing was more common with the Jewish writers than this figure. (See

Num. xxi. 28; compare Jer. xlvi. 45; Ps. lxvi. 12. lxxxiii. 14. xcvi. 8; Isa. ix. 19. xlvi. 14. lxvi. 15, 16; Jer. iv. 4. xxi. 12; Sam. ii. 3, 4; Ezek. xxi. 31. xxii. 18—22,—not to quote a host of others that might be brought forward. The judgments of God were *the fire*, the messengers of his wrath were *the axe*, and the ill-fated and disobedient nations were *the forest*. The destruction of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar is thus described:—‘ For thus saith the Lord unto the king’s house of Judah, thou art Gilead (a land of mountains and woods) unto me, and the head of Lebanon, (the land of cedars.) Yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons ; and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and *cast them into the fire*. And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city. Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.’ (Jer. xxii. 6, 9.)

It was probably with a knowledge of all these circumstances, and a much more intimate knowledge than we can now have of the style of the Jewish prophets, that John the Baptist used the metaphors in the passage at the head of this article. We have therefore the best of reasons for supposing, that he referred to the judgments which were *then* impending over the Jews. The Romans were about to come upon them, and hew them down, and cast them, as a nation, into the fire of destruction.

In the view which we have given of this parable, commentators of all denominations agree. ‘ If sinners be compared to trees in a forest,’ says Calmet, he who smites them is compared to an axe. (Isaiah x. 15.) This is especially apparent in the proverbial phraseology used by John the Baptist, (Matt. iii. 10; Luke iii. 9.) ‘ The axe is laid to the root of the trees’—irresistible punishment, destruction, is near. We risk little in referring this to the Roman power and armies, which, as an axe, most

vehemently cut away the very existence of the Jewish polity and state.' (See Judges ix. 8 ; Psalms lxxiv. 5 ; Isaiah xiv. 6—8; Ezek. xvii. 22—24.)*

Adam Clarke says, the Jewish nation is the tree, and the Romans the axe, which by the just judgment of God was speedily to cut it down. * * * * God kept the Romans, as an axe laying at the root of this tree, who were ready to cut it down the moment God gave them the commission.' †

Dr. Lightfoot explains this passage to the same purpose. 'By the axe being now laid to the root of the trees,' says he, 'may fitly be understood, 1st. the certainty of their desolation, and, 2d. the nearness, in that the instrument of their destruction was already prepared, and brought close to them; the Romans that should ruin their city and nation, being already masters and rulers over them.' ‡ Dr. Hammond understands the passage to refer to the destruction of the Jewish nation; § so also do Bp. Pearce || and Dr. Gill. ¶ The Continuators of Poole's Annotations rather judge this application probable. ** Le Clerc †† applies it in the same manner, as do likewise Beausobre and L'Enfant. ‡‡ The opinions of many other commentators might be adduced in this place, but we judge it unnecessary. The references which we have made will show how generally commentators of the highest rank have given the exposition which we have adopted.

* Dic. Art. Axe.

† Comment. on the place.

‡ Works, iv. 267.

§ Par. and Annot. on Matt. iii. 12.

|| Com. on the place.

¶ Exposition on the place.

** Annotations on the place.

†† Novum Test. on Matt. iii. 12.

‡‡ This is their comment: 'Voi Esai x. 33, 34. Jean Baptiste predict ici la ruine entiere du Temple, de la ville, et de la nation, qui arriva 40 ans apres la mort de Jesus Christ.' On Matt. iii. 10.

PARABLE OF THE WINNOWING FAN

Matthew iii. 12. Luke iii. 17.

' Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'—Matt. iii. 12.

IN the parable of the Axe, the destruction of the Jews was foretold under the figure of cutting down a tree and casting it into the fire; in this the distinction that was to be made at the time of that calamity, between the believing and unbelieving part of the nation, is represented by the separation of wheat from chaff. As the wheat was gathered into the garner, so the Christians were preserved safe from the dreadful calamities that overthrew the Jews; and as the chaff was burned, so were the enemies of Christ utterly destroyed.

This parable is drawn from the customs of the Jews in reference to threshing and winnowing their grain; and those customs must be well understood in order that the force of the parable may be seen. With us the grain is threshed by being beaten with a cudgel, usually called a *fail*; and is winnowed by a machine constructed to produce an artificial current of air, which drives the chaff out through one aperture, while the grain passes down through another into a receiver at the bottom. The Jews however threshed and winnowed very differently. Their threshing floors were built in places well exposed to the wind, and advantages were taken of high winds for the purpose of winnowing.* (See Judges vi. 11, and 2 Sam xxiv. 18.) The threshing instrument was made with wheels

* Smith and Dwight, in their Travels in Armenia, in 1830, describe the threshing floors as follows: 'A view of the many circular threshing floors, which crowned every little eminence around, and were almost as numerous as the houses, had induced us in the evening to express to the melik our surprise at the quantity of grain that seemed to be cultivated by this village.' Vol. ii. p. 20.

having teeth, and was drawn about by oxen, the driver seated upon the frame, over the bundles that had been thrown upon the floor, which, by the treading of the oxen and the operation of the wheels, were completely beaten to pieces. Hence Isaiah xli. 15 : ‘ I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument *having teeth*;’ and xxv. 10, as Bp. Lowth translates it, ‘ Moab shall be threshed in this place, as the straw is threshed under the wheels of the car.’ See also the same prophet, xxviii. 27, 28. As the bundles became sufficiently bruised they were turned into a pile on the centre of the area, and at a favorable opportunity, when there was sufficient wind, the winnowing was done. By means of a fork, or ‘ winnowing shovel,’ to use the phrase Dr. Campbell prefers, the body of threshed straw was thrown into the air, and the chaff was blown aside by the wind, but the grain fell upon the floor. Thus what is translated *fan* in the passage before us, commentators prefer to call a *fork*, or *winnowing shovel*.* The chaff, of no value, was consumed, but the grain was gathered into the barn.†

The sacred writings abound in figures founded on these customs. Thus the wicked ‘ are like the *chaff* which the wind driveth away,’ and ‘ as *stubble* before the wind.’ (Psalms i. 4; Job xxi. 18; also Ex. xv. 7; Psa. xxxv. 5. lxxxiii. 13; Isaiah xvii. 13. xl. 24. xlvii. 14; Dan. ii. 35.) The victorious people are sometimes represented as a huge machine, that threshes and crumbles even mountains and hills like straw; but the conquered are prostrated on the earth, like the bundles on the threshing floor, and ground to powder by the instruments of destruction. (2 Sam. xiii. 31; Amos i. 3; Micah iv. 12, 13.) The separation between the righteous and the wicked is denoted by the separation of the chaff from the pure grain, not only in the parable before us, but in other parts of the scripture. Thus the destruction of the Jews, by

* See Arch. Bp. Newcome, Dr. Campbell, and the Imp. Version.

† For Jewish customs in these respects, see Jahn’s Bib. Arch. under Threshing and Ventilation; Calmet’s Dic. Art. Threshing; and Brown’s Antiq. of Jews, under Agriculture of Judea.

the sword, by famine, by pestilence, by captivity, Jer. xv. 2, 3, is described in the following manner, ver. 7: ‘I will *fan* them with a *fan* in the gates of the land,’ i. e. they shall be broken in pieces, and winnowed,—the wind shall drive the chaff away, and it shall be utterly destroyed. (Isaiah v. 24; Joel ii. 5; Obad. 18; Nahum i. 10.) And when we come to Malachi, we find him speaking of the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, under precisely the same figure. ‘For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly shall be *stubble*: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Lord of Hosts,’ (Mal. iv. 1.) Commentators apply this passage to ‘the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.’* The Baptist therefore used not a new figure, but one of very common occurrence, with which the Jews were all well acquainted; and in fact his predecessor Malachi applied the same figure to precisely the same occasion and events. This figure was perfectly just, and the propriety of it was afterwards shown by matter of fact. Jesus Christ did thoroughly purge or cleanse his threshing floor. The chaff was separated from the wheat. The unbelieving part of the house of Israel was separated from the believers. The former were destroyed by the fire of the judgments which came on Jerusalem, and which burned until the nation was wholly extirpated, for it could not be quenched. The latter were preserved. Perceiving the signs which Jesus had pointed out as precursors of the overthrow of Jerusalem, they fled into the mountainous parts of Judea, (Matt. xxiv. 16,) where, like wheat in the granary, they were safe from the raging element which devoured the chaff.

The phrase ‘*unquenchable fire*,’ has been by some adduced to prove the doctrine of never ending punishment. If the explanation we have given of this parable be proper, (and we are supported in it by writers of the highest note who believed in endless misery,) we cannot see how this ‘unquenchable fire’ can be supposed to exist in the future

* A. Clarke on the passage.

state at all. The threshing floor was not there, nor was the winnowing shovel there, nor was the operation of separating the chaff from the wheat done there; and why the burning of the chaff should be supposed to take place there, we cannot imagine. The husbandman generally burned his chaff where it accumulated after the operation of threshing and winnowing; he did not think of taking it away into some other part of the land and burning it. The fire which is mentioned in the parable, was the fire of divine judgment which fell on Judea, and it was called unquenchable, inasmuch as it did not subside until the work of destruction was fully done. It may well be imagined that fire among the dry stubble was as unquenchable as any thing could be, not abating in the least until the whole was consumed. So saith Dr. Hammond. ‘They put fire to the chaff at the wind side, and that keeps on, and never gives over till it has consumed all the chaff, and so is a kind of *αεβστον πυρ*, unquenchable fire, a fire never quenchable till it hath done its work.’ He concludes his remarks on the parable by observing, ‘it was fulfilled on the Jews even in this life (as it was oft foretold;) the godly true penitents that received Christ, through these tribulations were preserved, when the rest that could not bear or hold out the trial, all that the wind of temptation, false doctrine, &c. carried away, were generally destroyed, the corn laid up in a garner, and the chaff devoured with the fire.’*

Adam Clarke is to the same purport; but as his Commentary is frequently met with, we forbear to quote. Dr. Gill follows the same mode of explaining the parable.† Dr. Lightfoot understands by the *fan*, the gospel as preached by Christ when on earth; by the floor the church of Israel or the nation of the Jews, who are called the Lord’s floor in Isaiah, (xxi. 10,) and are said to be fanned with a fan, (Jer. xv. 7.) By the wheat and the chaff he understands the saints and the wicked among the Jews in

* Dr. Hammond was an undoubted believer in endless misery, but he did not apply this parable to that event. Annot. on the place.

† See his Exposition on the passage.

our Saviour's day.' He says 'that the main intent of the verse is to show forth the destruction of Jerusalem.'*

Bp. Pearce says, 'In this whole verse the destruction of the Jewish state is expressed in the terms of husbandmen; and by the wheat's being gathered into the garner seems meant that the believers in Jesus should not be involved in that calamity.'†

Le Clerc, notwithstanding he believed in the future punishment of the Jews, and mentioned it in his note on Matt. iii. 12, yet he applied the passage as we have applied it here. On the phrase *unquenchable fire* he adds, 'i. e. evidently until it had consumed the whole chaff; for after dry and combustible materials are set on fire, it does not go out until it has destroyed the whole. By these words is signified the utter destruction of the Jews, which commenced under Vespasian, and was completed at last under Adrian. Although there were some intervals without war, yet it was not finished until it had broken up and destroyed all the Jews of Palestine. See Josephus De Bell. Jud. and Dio in his Lives of Trajan and Adrian.'‡

PARABLE OF THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

Matt. v. 13. Mark ix. 50. Luke xiv. 34, 35.

'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.'—Matt. v. 13.

THIS parable occurs in the Sermon on the Mount, which appears to have been addressed particularly to the disciples of Christ. 'When he was set, his *disciples* came

*Works, iv. 285, 287.

†Comment. &c. note on the place. With this Kenrick's note, in his Exposition, agrees.

‡Novum Test. on the passage.

unto him ; and he opened his mouth and taught *them*, saying, &c. vers. 1, 2. That Jesus was addressing his disciples seems further evident from verses 11 and 12. ‘Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely *for my sake*. Rejoice and be exceeding glad ; for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.’

Let us seek the reason why the disciples are represented as the ‘salt of the earth.’ Salt was used for two purposes among the Jews ; first, to preserve undressed meat and season food ; and second, to enrich the cultivated lands. Every one knows the preserving qualities of salt. In the hot climate of Judea, it was so necessary a thing, that no meat could be preserved sweet, though but for a short time, without it. Hence it has been supposed by commentators in general, that Jesus described his apostles under the figure of salt, because, from their knowledge of his doctrine, and their efforts to spread it in the world, they would perform the same office for mankind, that salt does for animal food ; i. e. they would save men from corruption and impurity in their doctrines and habits.

For this reason the apostles were warned against losing the power of the divine word. If they departed from the doctrine of Jesus, and fell away into error and sin, they were like salt which had lost its savor—it had no longer the properties of salt, and as it could not be applied to the common uses of salt, it was good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. The Jews sometimes dug their salt from the earth, and sometimes gathered it from the margins and surfaces of salt lakes. It has been supposed that salt of both kinds would lose its savor. Benson in his Life of Christ, quotes from Maundrell’s Book of Travels, the following passage : ‘Along on one side of the valley, towards Gibul, there is a small precipice about two men’s length, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt ; and in this you may see how the veins of it lie. I broke a piece of it, of which, that part that was exposed to the rain, sun and air, though it had the sparks and par-

ticles of salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savor ; the inner part which was connected to the rock, retained its savor as I found by proof.' Calmet shows another instance of the manner in which salt lost its savor. 'The surface of the salt lakes, also, the thinner crust of salt next to the edges of the lakes, after rains, and especially after long continued rains, loses the saline particles, which are washed away and dried off, yet it retains the form and appearance of salt, like the most perfect. For this reason those who go to gather salt from the lakes, drive their horses and carts over this worthless matter, (and consequently trample it into mere mud and dirt) in order to get some distance into the lake, where the salt is better ; and often they are obliged to dig away the surface, from thence to obtain the salt pure and pungent.'* Thus if the disciples should lose the savor of the divine word, how could they benefit mankind ? The church of Christ did, in the course of time, lose its savor ; and then it exercised rather a corrupting than a purifying influence upon the world.

'It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.' Adam Clarke gives a paragraph from Schoetgenius,† which may with propriety be introduced in this place. 'There was a species of salt in Judea, which was generated at the lake Asphaltites, and hence called *bituminous salt*, easily rendered vapid and of no other use but to be spread in a part of the temple, to prevent the slipping in wet weather. This is probably what our Lord alludes to in this place.' Christians, without the power of divine truth, would be equally useless, and would be rejected as insipid salt, or the vilest substances.

Le Clerc took a somewhat different view of this subject. He supposed that common salt was not referred to ; for that, he said, will not lose its saline quality ; but the salt of wood ashes, or the ashes impregnated with salt. This is his comment on the passage : 'Two things may be understood by the word salt in this place, either salt, properly

* Dictionary, Art. Salt.

† Horæ. Heb. vol. i. p. 18.

so called, or the ashes of burnt wood impregnated with salt, and used to fertilize the earth. This is to be seen, especially when the woods and brush are burnt and consumed even to the roots, in soil before uncultivated ; for by this mixture of the ashes, it becomes very fruitful, and for many years satisfies the hope of the husbandman. If salt here be understood in the former sense, this comparison of Christ has not the usual plainness of his comparisons (for salt never loses its savor;) but he declares if it should so happen that the salt should lose its savor, it would become useless. But if salt be taken for salt ashes, then these ashes are said to have become useless, if by drenching they may have lost their saline particles, and are now to be thrown into the public way, rather than upon the cultivated fields.

In the first sense, to be the salt of the earth, signifies that the apostles would prevent the earth from degenerating, that is, prevent men from becoming utterly corrupt ; in the latter sense it will signify that they would fertilize the earth, that is, make men fruitful of good works. In either sense the words will well apply to those who first preached the gospel.* Archbishop Newcome says, ‘It has been supposed, that Jesus might observe husbandmen manuring the soil with that material, when he called his disciples *the salt of the earth.*’† Horne says on Matt. v. 13, ‘Salt either by itself, or mixed in the dunghill in order to promote putrefaction, is specially mentioned as one article of manure.’‡ So it is said, (Luke xiv. 34, 35,) ‘Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill ; but men cast it out.’

It seems unquestionable that salt was used both for the

* Novum Test. on the place. In repeating this suggestion in the note on Luke xiv. 34, Le Clerc says, with proper modesty, ‘I confess I can produce no example to show that these *wood ashes* were called salt. And, therefore, I affirm nothing peremptorily. But let the learned consider what there may be in this conjecture.’ See Benson’s Life of Christ, London, 1764, p. 270.

† Observ. p. 103.

‡ Introduc. iii. 443.

seasoning and preserving of food, and for enriching the land. The apostles were *the salt of the earth*, in which way soever we understand it here; for they preserved men from *impurity* by the power of the gospel of God's wisdom, and also *enriched* their hearts, so that they bore abundantly the fruits of the Spirit. Salt is thus put for the influence of the gospel, with which Paul enjoins Christians at all times to have their speech seasoned. ‘Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with *salt*, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.’ (Col. iv. 6.)

PARABLE OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Matthew v. 14, 15.

‘Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.’—Matt. v. 14—15.

THIS parable, like the preceding, was spoken by the Saviour to his apostles; and it was designed to induce them not to be ashamed of him and his words, but to make an open profession of their faith before the world; and govern their lives by its influence.

Light is used metaphorically very often in the scriptures. It is said that God is light. ‘God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.’ (1 John i. 5; James i. 17.) John the Baptist was described as ‘a burning and a shining light.’ (John v. 35.) When Simeon held the infant Jesus in his arms in the temple, he said, ‘Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a *light* to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.’ (Luke ii. 30—32.) Hence Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘I am *the light of the world*:

he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' (John viii. 12.) And again, 'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.' (xii. 46.) The gospel which Jesus came into the world to preach is accordingly called light. (See Isaiah ix. 2; and Matt. iv. 16;) and 'the light of the glorious gospel of Christ,' (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Paul was sent to turn the Gentiles 'from darkness to light,' (Acts xxvi. 18; and the Christians are called 'the children of light, and the children of the day.' (1 Thess. v. 5.)

The apostles were in one sense, 'the light of the world'; 'Not originally, like the sun, as Christ is, (John i. 8, 9,) but by participation, as the moon and the stars, (Rev. i. 20; Phil. ii. 15.)* They were the repositories of truth; and as truth was moral light, and they reflected it upon men, they were 'the light of the world.' Adam Clarke says, '*Light of the world* was a title applied to the most eminent Rabbins. Christ transfers the title from these, and gives it to his own disciples, who, by the doctrines that he taught them, were to be the means of diffusing the light of life throughout the universe.'

Light invariably invites the attention of those who are in darkness. Jesus therefore, directed his followers, as the eyes of the world would be turned to them, that they must be careful to maintain good works, so that men by their conduct might be led to glorify their Father in heaven. With this view Jesus tells them that 'a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.'

It is supposed that he drew his figure from the city of Bethulia, which was situated upon a mountain, in plain sight of the spot where he delivered these instructions. With this view Maundrell says, 'A few points towards the north (of Tabor) appears that which they call the mount of beatitudes, a small rising, from which our blessed Saviour delivered his Sermon in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters of Matt. Not far from this little hill is the city *Saphet*, supposed to be the ancient *Bethulia*. It stands

* Assembly's Annotations.

upon a very *eminent* and *conspicuous* mountain, and is seen far and near. May we not suppose that Christ alludes to this city, in these words of his, ‘A city set on a hill cannot be hid.’ The disciples being the light of the world, could no more escape the observation of men, than a city set on a hill could be hid. They were taught to expect, therefore, that the eyes of the world would be continually upon them, and were exhorted to let their good works be seen by all, that all might glorify their Father in heaven. It was a duty equally binding upon them, that they should have no disposition to shrink from public observation, nor to hide the light of which God had made them the repositories, as is seen by the succeeding comparison. ‘*Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*’ Those who make themselves acquainted with the truth, and hesitate to profess it before men, are chargeable with the same folly with the man who should light a candle, and then hide it under a bushel. The very object of lighting a candle is to give light—the object of hiding it would be to conceal that light; and it is therefore preposterously absurd that those who light a candle should put it under a bushel. Truth is moral light. Those who ignite the torch of the mind with its holy flame, should not endeavor to hide the light thereof; but let it shine before men, that others may see it and glorify God. Jesus would not that any should be ashamed of him. ‘Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.’ The apostle exhorts his Hebrew brethren to ‘hold fast the *profession* of their faith without wavering.’ Truth is not a thing of which man may be ashamed; and hence the exhortation is highly proper, ‘Let your light *shine before men*, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ At the death of Christ, ‘when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God;’ i. e. by professing that Jesus was a righteous person. So, by manifesting

our faith before mankind, we shall bring them to believe in Christ, and thus will they glorify our Father in heaven, as the centurion did.

Mr. Benson, in his life of Christ, remarks very justly upon this parable, ‘That when Jesus had compared his disciples to the *sun*, the other two passages, (viz. the comparison of the *city* and of the *candle*) were intended to admonish them of their duty, and to put them in mind of the great honor conferred upon them. Their duty was to hold up to public view the light of truth and righteousness, and to make it as conspicuous as they were able. They were not to expect to pass through the world unobserved and unregarded; neither were they to affect, or endeavor it, as they might be under a temptation to do, from the persecutions which they might meet with, and of which our Lord had just before warned them, (Matt. v. 10—12.) It is the business of light to discover other things, (Eph. v. 13,) and it cannot but be itself visible. It is not possible that men should discern other things by the light of the sun, and yet take no notice of the sun itself. Hence, then, our Lord inculcates it upon his disciples, that they must reckon upon being much observed; and upon that account must be the more careful not to conceal their light; but let it shine forth more brightly before men; that is, in the sight of all that behold them, ver. 16, which is thus expressed, (Phil. ii. 15, 16,) they were to be ‘*blameless and harmless*, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they were to *shine as lights* in the world, holding forth the *word* of life.’ It is evident from the application, (Matt. v. 16,) that this is what our Saviour designed to inculcate upon his followers. Now this he enforces from the intention of God; as if he had said, God would not have appointed you to be the light of the world, if he had designed that you should be hid and concealed from the view of the world. And to illustrate and confirm this, are those two passages brought in by him; whereby he teaches them to use the same method in judging of the design of God, that they commonly do in

judging of the designs of men, namely, to judge by the nature of the works. Our Saviour's meaning is well expressed in the following paraphrase, given by Mr. Pierce : ‘ It is manifest that when men build a city upon a hill, they have no intention that it should not be seen. If an obscure habitation were designed, it should be some den, or cave of the earth, or a small cottage in a valley, or wood ; and not a well-built city on the top of a hill. And again, when men light a candle, they do not do it, to put it under a bushel, or any vessel, that should enclose and shut up the light of it, which would render their action insignificant and impertinent ; but they set it where it may be most commodiously viewed, and best diffuse its light, and so be most useful in the house. Thus you account for men’s designs by their actions : do the like in accounting for God’s designs. And, therefore, expect not to be hid, since God has appointed you to be *the light of the world*. As, therefore, men light a candle, to give light to those who are in the house, so God has made you the light of the world, that you may shine in and give light to it. This, then, you are to endeavor to do, and accordingly, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.**’

* Life of Christ, ed. of 1764, pp. 394, 395.

PARABLE OF THE OFFENDING HAND, &c.

Matt. v. 29, 30. xviii. 8, 9. Mark ix. 43—48.

'And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'—Mark ix. 43—48.

As this parable has been often misapplied, and, as it has been generally used in defence of the doctrine of endless torment, and moreover, as it is now thought to be one of the principal supports of that sentiment, we propose to examine it at some length.

1. We shall show what is intended by cutting off a hand, or a foot, or plucking out an eye.
2. What is intended by entering into 'life,' (ver. 43) or 'the kingdom of God,' (ver. 47.)
3. The true sense of the word 'hell,' and of the phrase 'hell fire.'
4. Consider the words, 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' (Vers. 44, 46, 48.)
5. Illustrate the proposition, that it was better to part with the offending member, than to be cast into 'hell fire.'
1. What is intended by cutting off a hand, or a foot, or plucking out an eye. The evident sense of the figure is, *let nothing prevent you from embracing my gospel, and entering into life.* By observing Matt. v. 23, it will be perceived that Jesus had been speaking of a sin, into which men were led by the instrumentality of the eye. He then immediately adds, 'If thy right eye offend thee,

pluck it out, and cast it from thee.' Forego all gratifications inconsistent with virtue, and the moral laws of my kingdom; for it is better so to do, than by giving yourselves up to sin, to be totally destroyed. Bp. Pearce remarks, '*If thy hand offend thee*, that is, cause thee to fall off from thy duty. This, and what follows in verse 30, is figuratively spoken, as in Matt. vi. 3. The meaning is, deny thyself every thing which may lead thee to sin. Agreeably to this, Philostratus,* speaking of Isæus, who had on a sudden quite altered his dress and manner of life, says that he was *like one who had cast away his former eyes*, meaning those inclinations of his that were dearest to him.'† Archbishop Newcome says on these words, 'If thy hand offend thee, &c. This is a strong eastern manner of expressing that seductions to sin, and particularly stumbling-blocks in the way of openly professing the gospel at that season, should be avoided at all events; and that the causes of guilt and apostacy should be removed, whatever favorite gratifications were foregone, whatever temporal evils were endured.'‡ Mr. Ballou has taken a little different view of this subject. 'The evident meaning of the Saviour,' says he, 'seems to be this: if one of your nearest connexions in the world, even if one as dear to you as a hand, should oppose your yielding obedience to the gospel, part with this dear connexion rather than part with divine truth. And though you thereby feel as one who has lost a hand, yet what you gain is more than what you lose. In this connexion Jesus mentions the cutting off a foot, and the plucking out of an eye, for the same cause as the cutting off of the hand; and it is very evident that this recommendation was given on account of the opposition that was constantly in exercise against the cause of truth, and which he knew would increase unto grievous persecution.'§ The views taken by these writers may all be considered just. No temptations, no fiends, nothing on

* De Vitis Sophist. i. 20.

† Comment. and Note on Matt. v. 29.

‡ Newcome's Observations, pp. 32, 33.

§ See Ballou's Lectures, ed. of 1832, p. 195.

earth, should have hindered men from entering the kingdom of Christ ; every thing must have been foregone when put into competition with this ; since, in that age, the greatest calamities ever known fell on the enemies of the Son of God.

2. What is intended by entering into ‘ life,’ or the ‘ kingdom of God.’ That these two phrases are synonymous will be evident by comparing verses 43 and 47. To enter into ‘ life’ in the scriptures, is to enter into the belief and enjoyment of the truth. Hence the Saviour saith, ‘ **THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL**, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ (John xvii. 3.) Here the knowledge of God is called ‘ *eternal life*. ’ Again, in John v. 24, we read, ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, ’ and shall not come into condemnation, but *is passed* (i. e. is already passed) from death unto life.’ John says, ‘ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren : he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.’ (1 John iii. 14.) These passages certainly make the subject plain ; and show that coming to the knowledge and enjoyment of the truth is ‘ entering into life.’ Now this is precisely what is meant by entering into ‘ the kingdom of God.’ The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, both signifying the same thing, are put for the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which he came to set up among men.* John the Baptist commenced his ministry by saying, ‘ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*. ’ (Matt. iii. 2.) When Jesus began to preach, he announced the approach of his moral kingdom in the same manner. ‘ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*. ’ (Matt. iv. 17.) In the instructions which Jesus gave his apostles, when he sent them out, he said, ‘ As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*. ’ (Matt. x. 7.) His kingdom was not afar off, it

* See Dr. Campbell’s Version of all the passages where these phrases occur, and his Preliminary Dissertation on the same subject. See also Adam Clarke on Matt. iii. 2.

was at hand ; it was not exclusively in another state of existence, it was here on the earth ; it was the *moral reign* of Christ among men. Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘The kingdom of God is come unto you.’ (Matt. xii. 28.) On another occasion he said, ‘The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is *within you*,’ or *among you*. (Luke xvii. 19, 20.) To enter into the kingdom of God, was to embrace, profess and obey the gospel. Whosoever did this was under the government of Christ ; he was in the *reign* of Christ ; he was in the *kingdom* of Christ. And as all the real disciples of the Redeemer were saved from those tribulations which fell on the unbelievers of that age, Jesus warned his followers that no consideration whatever should induce them to decline entering into the kingdom of God. These views will be more fully confirmed as we proceed.

3. Let us seek for the true sense of the word ‘hell,’ and of the phrase ‘hell fire.’ The Greek word here rendered ‘hell’ is *Gehenna*. Let me point out the *twelve* instances in which that word occurs in the New Testament. They are Matt. v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33; Mark ix. 43, 45, 47; Luke xii. 5; James iii. 6. It will be well to recollect that these are the only instances in which the word occurs ; that is, *seven* times in Matthew, *three* in Mark, *one* in Luke and *one* in James. John, it seems, never used the word, nor does it occur in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in any of Paul’s epistles, nor in the epistles of Peter, nor in Jude, nor in the Apocalypse. It is now generally allowed that neither *Sheol*, *Hades*, nor *Tartarus* signifies a place of eternal punishment ; * but the whole dependence for proof of such a

* There are four words rendered *hell* in the Bible, viz. *Sheol*, *Hades*, *Tartarus*, and *Gehenna*. *Sheol* is a Hebrew word, and of course is always found in the Old Testament. It occurs in *sixty-four* instances, in *thirty-two* of which it is rendered *hell*, and in the other *thirty-two*, *pit* and *grave*. *Hades* is a Greek translation of *Sheol*, and always has the same meaning. It occurs *eleven* times, *ten* of which it is rendered *hell*, and once (I Cor. xv. 55), *grave*. *Tartarus* does not really occur at all, but a denominative verb derived from it, which is

place of punishment is put on the word *Gehenna*. Is it not then a little singular, if this word signifies a place of eternal punishment, that it occurs in only four books of the New Testament, and but twelve times in the whole?

Professor Stuart, whose authority in this case will not be doubted, accounts for the derivation of the word *Gehenna* as follows: ‘The word Gehenna is derived, as all agree, from the Hebrew words *Gee Hinnom*. The valley of Hinnom (*Gee Hinnom*) is a part (the eastern section) of the pleasant Wadi or Valley, which bounds Jerusalem on the south, (Josh. xv. 8. xviii. 6.) Here in ancient times, and under some of the idolatrous kings, the worship of Moloch, the horrid idol god of the Ammonites, was practised. To this idol children were offered in sacrifice, (2 Kings xxiii. 10; Ezek. xxiii. 37, 39; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Levit. xviii. 21; xx. 2.) If we may credit the Rabbins, the head of the idol was like that of an ox; while the rest of its body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within; and being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms, and were there literally roasted alive. We cannot wonder then at the severe terms in which the worship of Moloch is every where denounced in the scriptures. Nor can we wonder that the place itself should have been called *Tophet*, that is, abomination, detestation, (from *Toph*, to vomit with loathing,) Jer. xxxi. 32; xix. 6; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Ezek. xxiii. 37, 39. After these sacrifices had ceased, the place was desecrated, and made one of loathing and horror. The pious king Josiah caused it to be polluted, (2 Kings xxiii. 10;) that is, he caused to be carried there the filth of the city of Jerusalem. It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, thus happily begun, was continued in after ages down to the period when our Saviour was on earth. Perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the same offal would breed

rendered ‘*cast down to hell*’. It is found *once* only, in 2 Peter, ii. 4. *Gehenna* occurs *twelve* times, and is uniformly rendered *hell*. In the common English version, the word *hell* occurs, in both Old and New Testaments, *fifty-five* times.

worms, (for so all putrifying meat of course does,) hence came the expression, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** Thus far Professor Stuart. We are happy to signify our assent in full to what he has here said. It must then be considered settled beyond all dispute, that the primary sense of *Gehenna* was the valley of Hinnom, near the city of Jerusalem.

During the idolatrous worship of the Jews in the valley of Hinnom, that place was regarded by them as sacred; but after this haunt of idolatry was broken up, and made the receptacle of the filth of Jerusalem, it became abominable in the sight of the whole nation. In process of time, as all writers agree, it came to be a place of punishment, where criminals were caused to suffer death by burning.

With such abhorrence and dread, under all these circumstances, did the Jews in time regard this place, that they came to use it as a figure of dreadful woes and judgments; and so we find it both in the Old and New Testament. Thus Jeremiah, (chap. xix.) foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, and makes use of Tophet, or Gehenna, as a figure of the desolations God would bring on that ill-fated city. ‘I will make this city desolate, and a hissing: every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss, because of all the plagues thereof, &c. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and **EVEN MAKE THIS CITY AS TOPHET**,’ verses 8, 12. See also Jer. vii. 31—34. This is the *metaphorical* sense of Gehenna, or Tophet, in the Old Testament; and with this knowledge let us turn to seek the sense in which it is used in the New. The first instance where we find the word is Matt. v. 22: ‘Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the

* Exegetical Essays, pp. 140, 141. Those who wish to consult other authorities, may see Dr. Campbell’s Dissertation on the words ‘Gehenna’ and ‘Hades,’ the Article on ‘Gehenna’ in Schleusner’s Lexicon, and the Lexicons in general.

council ; but whosoever shall say, *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of the fire of *Gehenna*,^{*} (hell-fire in the common translation.) Now that this cannot refer to a state of punishment in the future world, is evident from the terms of the passage. The ‘JUDGMENT’ here was, as Professor Stuart explains it, * ‘a lower court, viz. that of the *Septemviri* among the Hebrews;’ the ‘COUNCIL’ (to quote again the Professor’s words) was ‘the *Sanhedrim*, or highest council, who could inflict severer punishment than the court of *Septemviri*, q. d. he will deserve still severer punishment than he who is merely angry;’ the ‘hell-fire’ was the fire of the valley of Hinnom; as says the same author : ‘but he who shall say, *Thou fool*, shall be obnoxious to the fire of the valley of Hinnom, q. d. to a still higher and more severe punishment, such as is inflicted by burning to death in the valley of Hinnom.’ Now it is certain that ‘the judgment’ was in this world ; it is equally certain that ‘the council’ was in this world ; and it is just as certain that the punishment of *Gehenna* was in this world. If this passage is to be understood in a secondary or metaphorical sense, why then should we understand *Gehenna* to refer to the future world more than the other terms? If the primary sense of *Gehenna*, as all must confess, was the punishment of the valley of Hinnom, as much as ‘the judgment’ was the lower, and ‘the council’ the higher court of the Jews, by what rule of interpretation shall we consider the two latter terms to refer to punishment in the present state of being, but *Gehenna* to refer to punishment in the future state? We have no proof that the word had ever then been applied to punishment in the future state by any writer, sacred or profane ; and was this a proper manner in which to announce for the first time, that *Gehenna* was to receive a new sense, and be applied to a supposed punishment of which the Jews learned nothing from their scriptures? Furthermore, *Gehenna* had received a secondary sense in the Old Testament, as we have shown by the quota-

* Exeget. Essays, p. 142.

tions from Jeremiah ; and if Jesus used it in a secondary sense, why ought we not to suppose that he put the same secondary sense upon it that the Jewish prophets had?

We find the word again in Matt. xxiii. 33. ‘Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna (hell) ?’ In this place Jesus was discoursing of the judgments which were then impending over the Jews ; and he says, ver. 36, ‘all these things shall come upon this generation.’ On this Dr. Whitby remarks, that it signifies ‘in that very age, or whilst some of that generation of men lived, for the phrase *this generation* never bears any other sense in the New Testament than the men of this age.’* It cannot be disputed then, that the calamity which was described here by the word *Gehenna*, was a temporal calamity, and was to come on the generation which was on the earth at the time of the Saviour’s ministry. If it be asked what calamity it was, we reply, the same calamity that Jeremiah had described under the figure of *Gehenna*, viz. the destruction of the city and nation of the Jews, and which is described (Matt. xxiv. 21) as a ‘great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.’†

* Com. on Matt. xxiv. 34.

† To this it may replied, that notwithstanding ‘Gehenna never bears the sense of *future punishment* in the Old Testament, yet in the time of Christ it did have that signification, as used in common language among the Jews, and by their theological writers ; and therefore it is asked, would not the Jews so have understood Christ in his use of the word ? We answer No, even if this had been the case ; for did he not say concerning the ‘damnation of Gehenna,’ ‘all these things shall come on this generation ?’ Whatever, therefore, *their* views of Gehenna were, they could not have misunderstood him in *his* view of it. But it is far from being a settled question, that the Jews in time of Christ did understand by Gehenna a place of punishment in the invisible world. That the Pharisees believed in punishments after death we do not deny ; but Jesus explicitly admonished his disciples to ‘take heed and beware of the leaven (i. e. *doctrine*) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’ Compare Matt. xvi. 6, with 12. But that the Jews in the time of Christ used the word *Gehenna* to apply to future punishment, has never been proved. That word, as Mr. Balfour has shown, (Inquiry, 2d ed. pp. 239, 240,) does not occur in the Apochrypha.

That the later Jewish writers have applied *Gehenna* to a supposed punishment in the future state, we will not question ; but no writer in

If we examine the remaining passages in which *Gehenna* occurs, we shall find the views now advanced to be confirmed. Jesus told the Pharisees, (Matt. xxiii. 15,) that they made their proselytes ‘two-fold more the children of Gehenna than themselves.’ Here the figure is evidently borrowed from the valley of Hinnom, as an abominable and unholy place ; and a child of Gehenna was a very bad man, as in common language, a child of the gallows, would be one deserving to be hung. So St. James says, iii. 6, that ‘the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity ; it setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of *Gehenna*.’ Here Gehenna is made a figure of the evil passions by which the tongue is inflamed. The only other passages that remain in which the word is found are Matt. x. 28, and Luke xii. 5. They are parallel texts. ‘And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.’ But if the views taken by some diligent students of the Scriptures be correct, this passage confirms what we have said of *Gehenna*. To give what they regard as the true sense, we paraphrase it

the time of Christ had so applied the word that we have any knowledge of. Mr. Bernard Whitman refers to the Targums and the Talmuds to prove what was the sense of Gehenna among the Jews at that time ; but these authorities are altogether insufficient ; they are too late. The earliest of the Targums is that of Jonathan Ben Uziel, which Mr. Whitman says was written within thirty years of Christ ; but some of the German critics bring it down as late as the second or third century. ‘Most of the eminent critics agree that it could not have been completed till some time between two and four hundred years after Christ. Dr. Jahn thinks it a collection of the interpretations of several learned men, made towards the end of the third century, and containing some of a much older date. Eichhorn says, that Jonathan certainly lived later than the birth of Christ ; and judging from his style, his fables, his perversions of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and from the profound silence of the early Jews and Christian fathers, he concludes that his compilation cannot have been made before the fourth century. The same circumstances that Eichhorn adduces, are thought by Bertholdt to indicate the second or third century ; and he is confident that the collection ‘cannot have attained its complete form, before the end of the second century.’ With these general conclusions, it is said that Bauer likewise agrees ; and some critics have referred the work to as late a period as the seventh or eighth century. See Uni. Expos. ii 368, where reference to the authorities is made.

as follows : ‘ Fear not them who torture (*ανονείρω*) the body, but cannot lawfully destroy life ; but fear that power which is able both to torture your body and destroy your life in Gehenna.’ The Jews, in the time of Christ, could not lawfully take life ; the Roman authority only had that power. (See John xviii. 31.) ‘ The Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.’ Christ warned his disciples to fear less the power which could only torture them, than that which could totally destroy them in the valley of Hinnom. This passage, therefore, if this view of it be correct, very naturally admits of the same sense which we have ascertained Gehenna to bear in the other cases. The result of all our examinations into this subject has been invariably the same, viz. that the original signification of the word Gehenna was the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem ; but when the word was used in a secondary sense, it signified *any severe punishment, particularly the destruction of the Jews, and the calamities which beset them on that event, to which the Saviour referred, when he said to the Pharisees, ‘How can ye escape the damnation of hell?’*

Having thus ascertained the true sense of the word *Gehenna*, let us,

4. Consider the words, ‘ where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’ (Vers. 44, 46, 48.) It cannot be doubted for a moment, that these words must be joined in their sense with *Gehenna*. The adverb *where* points to that place as the place in which the worm did not die, and in which the fire was not quenched. Gehenna was made the receptacle of the filth and offal of Jerusalem, in which, of course, worms were bred, and to destroy which a perpetual fire was kept burning. These expressions were designed to show, that the punishment of those, who, like the Jews, did not enter into the kingdom of Christ, would be severe like that of Gehenna, and of a very long duration. It is an indisputable fact, that our Lord borrowed this expression from the Jewish prophets ; and I am willing to follow the rule so judiciously laid down by Dr. Whitby. ‘ These words seem plainly taken from

Isaiah lxvi. 24, where they exactly may be found ; and it seems reasonable to interpret them according to the received opinion of the Jews, since otherwise our Lord, by using this expression frequently in speaking to them who would be sure to understand it in the usual sense, without saying anything to show he did not understand it as they did, must have strengthened them in their error.* What was the sense in which Isaiah used these words? (See chap. lxvi. 24.) ‘And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me ; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.’ This passage cannot be considered as having reference to a future state of punishment, because it is said to be fulfilled where time is denoted by *new moons and sabbaths* ; and by comparing Isaiah lxvi. 22, with lxv. 17—21, it will be seen, further, that at this time men were to ‘build them houses and inhabit them, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.’ It is unquestionable that the prophet used the words before us in application to *temporal judgments* ; and according to Dr. Whitby’s wholesome rule, we must so understand the words of Christ.† It appears from Dr. Lightfoot, that some of the Jewish Rabbins understood the words of Isaiah in the same manner. ‘Some of the Rabbins apply that of Isaiah hither, (chap. lxvi. verse the last :) ‘They shall go out and see the dead carcasses of the men that rebel against me ; for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched.’ ‘Those Gentiles (saith Kimchi upon the place) who come to worship from month to month, and from sabbath to sabbath, shall go out without Jerusalem into the valley of Jehoshaphat, (or Hinnom) and shall see the carcasses of Gog and Magog, &c.’ And a little after, ‘The just shall go out without Jerusalem into the valley

* Com. on Mark ix. 43, 44.

† Ballou’s Lectures, p. 191.

of Hinnom, and shall see those that rebel, &c.' To this Lightfoot adds, that this was called the valley of Jehoshaphat, either because he here erected some building, or did some other work, or because of judgment, the word 'Jehoshaphat' signifying, the Lord is judge.* If Whitby's rule is a good one, and Lightfoot concurs with him in this particular, (xi. 407,) Jesus must have intended by the words under examination, the *temporal* judgment which fell on the Jews. To represent any divine judgment that was effectual, that did not cease until it had done its whole work, by unquenchable fire, was the commonest thing with the Jewish writers. Compare with this the Notes on the Parable of the Winnowing Fan. (See also Isaiah 1. 31; xxxiv. 10; Jer. iv. 4; vii. 20; xvii. 4, 27; Ezek. xx. 47, 48.) The word *αεβεστος*, rendered unquenchable, occurs in the following instances only in the New Testament: Matt. iii. 12, and its parallel, Luke iii. 17; Mark ix. 43, 45. From all that has been said it will be clearly seen, that Jesus but followed the examples of the Jewish prophets, in applying the phrases 'Gehenna,' 'the worm that dieth not,' 'the fire that shall not be quenched,' to the temporal judgments of the Jews.

5. Illustrate the proposition, that it was better to part with the offending member, than to be cast into 'hell fire.' After the foregoing remarks on this parable, it cannot be necessary that much be said under this head. The 'damnation of Gehenna,' which Jesus mentioned, (Matt. xxiii. 33,) he described to be a '*great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.' (Matt. xxiv. 21.) Was it not better to part with friends, and all improper gratifications, and all apparent temporal advantages for the kingdom of Christ, than, by losing that kingdom, to suffer the judgment of Gehenna? Jesus said, 'Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.' Whosoever, to obtain temporal good, shall hesitate to become my disciple, shall lose the very object at which he aims; while 'whosoever will lose his life for

* Works, x. 81, 82.

my sake shall find it.' He who shall expose himself to temporal loss for my kingdom, shall, in reality, be a great gainer thereby. The apostles entered into life maimed. Peter said, to his Master, ' Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.' Jesus replied, ' Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left *house*, or *parents*, or *brethren*, or *wife*, or *children*, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time ;' i. e. the period under the law; ' and in the world to come,' the *age* to come, * ' life everlasting.' This passage is a fair illustration of the proposition under consideration. Those who cheerfully parted with all hindrances to entering the kingdom of the gospel, and entered that kingdom without them, enjoyed, in reality, more than others, before the proud neck of the persecuting Jews was broken; but when the judgments fell on that nation, and they were ' ground to powder,' there cannot be a question that it was far better to be a member of the kingdom of God. The advice of Christ, then, in the parable, was perfectly reasonable. It was better to enter into life maimed, than to be cast into hell fire.

PARABLE OF THE STRAIT GATE.

Matt. vii. 13, 14.

' Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therewith: Because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

THIS parable has been frequently employed to give support to a false theology. The strait and narrow way,

* On the propriety of this rendering, see the Notes on the Parable of the Tares of the Field, under the sixth head, for what I have to offer. It will save a repetition of the argument.

it has been thought, is the way of truth and righteousness. The broad road is the road of error and sin. The former leads to *life*, that is, to eternal glory in another state of existence ; the latter leads to destruction, that is, to endless sin and misery in that state. As *few* find the strait gate, and *many* the broad road, so few will be saved compared with the number of the lost.

Now, that this is manifestly a wrong application of the parable, is evident from the circumstance that Jesus was not, in the whole context, speaking of the future state. ‘Enter ye in at the strait gate.’ Does this necessarily refer to the future state ? ‘For strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which *leadeth* unto life, and few there *be* that *find* it.’ ‘Wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that *leadeth* to destruction, and many there *be* which *go* in thereto.’ There is nothing here which necessarily applies the passage to the future state. Life and destruction may both be found in this world ; it is not necessary that we go into another world to find them.

Wisdom is *life*. ‘Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of *life* to them that lay hold upon her ; and happy is every one that retaineth her.’ (Prov. iii. 17, 18.) Again it is said, (Prov. viii. 35,) ‘Whoso findeth me findeth *life*.’ Again, see Prov. x. 17, which is a very appropriate illustration of the parable before us : ‘He is in THE WAY OF LIFE that keepeth instruction ; but he that refuseth reproof, erreth.’ Those who kept the instructions of Christ were in the way of life ; they had entered the ‘strait gate,’ and were in the ‘narrow way ;’ but those who refused his reproof, were in the way of death. Wisdom was the *life* enjoyed on the one hand, and folly was the *death* suffered on the other. In Prov. xii. 28, it is said, ‘In the way of righteousness *is* *life*, and in the pathway thereof there is no *death*.’ The apostle Paul saith, (Rom. viii. 6,) ‘To be carnally minded is *death*; but to be spiritually minded *is* *life* and *peace*.’ Here it is not said that *life* followed spiritual mindedness as a reward ; but the spiritual mindedness was *life itself*. The apostle John saith,

speaking of Christ, ‘he that hath the Son *hath life*,’ (1 John v. 12,) and to the same purport he remarks, ‘he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*.’ (John v. 24.)

On the other hand, a state of folly and sin is represented as a state of death.’ ‘If a man keep my saying,’ saith Christ, ‘he shall never see death. (John viii. 51.) This cannot, of course, mean natural death. ‘To be carnally minded is *death*.’ (Rom. viii. 6.) Death is not put here as a punishment which succeeds carnal mindedness—the apostle asserts that that very carnal mindedness is *death*. ‘To be carnally minded is **DEATH**.’ A state of hatred is represented as a state of death. ‘He that loveth not his brother *abideth in death*.’ (1 John iii. 14.) And hence the same apostle saith, ‘We know that we have passed *from death unto life*, because we love the brethren.’ How true is it then, that ‘righteousness delivereth from death.’ (Prov. x. 2.)

These scriptures develope the great principles on which the figure in the parable before us is founded. Sin and error are every where in the scriptures represented as a state of death; while, on the other hand, righteousness and truth are called life and peace. Thus in the parable, he who enters the ‘wide gate,’ is sure to find destruction, and he who enters the ‘strait gate,’ is sure to find life.

The verse which immediately precedes the parable is this—‘All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.’ Adam Clarke observes, ‘Enter in through **THIS strait gate**, i. e. *of doing to every one as you would he should do unto you*; for this alone seems to be the strait gate which our Lord alluded to.* He who obeys that command, must be possessed of the spirit of wisdom and love, and having entered the ‘strait gate,’ he enjoys life. ‘In the way of righteousness is life,’ and he finds it. He who does not obey that command, has the spirit

* Com. on Matt. vii. 13.

of death within him : he is carnally minded ; he hateth his brother, and abideth in death.

Under this phrase, ‘*gate*,’ saith Lightfoot, ‘are very many things in religion expressed in the Holy Scripture, and also in the Jewish writers. The ‘gate of repentance’ is mentioned by the Chaldee paraphrast upon Jer. xxxiii. 6, and ‘the gate of prayers,’ and ‘the gate of tears.’ ‘Since the temple was laid waste, the gates of prayer were shut, but the gates of tears were not shut.’* When the apostle Paul found much work to do in the gospel at Ephesus, he said, ‘a great *door* and effectual is opened unto me.’ (1 Cor. xvi. 9.) So when he and Barnabas went to Antioch to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and give them the means of believing, it was said, ‘God had opened the *door* of faith unto the Gentiles.’ (Acts xiv. 27.) And liberty to preach the gospel freely, Paul calls ‘a *door* of utterance.’ (Col. iv. 3.) When Jacob, on his journey to Haran, heard the divine promise to him and his seed, he called the place at which he received it ‘the gate of heaven.’ (Gen. xxviii. 17.) It was to him the entrance to heaven, where he became acquainted with God’s grace, and entered into its enjoyments. (See also Psal. cxviii. 19, 20.)

Cebes, an ancient philosopher, who lived four hundred years before Christ, employed the same figure. ‘Do you see that small gate, and the path leading thereto, little frequented, and trodden by very few, and appearing steep, and rough, and craggy? This is the way,’ he adds, ‘that leads to true knowledge.’† Christ calls the way strait, and the gate narrow, as Le Clerc remarks, because according to the habits of that generation but few walked in the right way.

‘By a *gate*,’ says Bishop Pearce,’‡ ‘the Jews understand that which leads or lets men into the sense and knowledge of any doctrine. Hence Maimonides’ treatise

* Works, xi. 153.

† Le Clerc, Novum Test. Matt. vii. 14.

‡ Com. on the passage.

concerning the law of Moses, is called by a word signifying *the gate* of Moses.' For this reason, perhaps, Jesus represented the precept we have referred to by a 'gate'; it contained the sense of all his precepts, and so to speak, *let men in* to the very spirit of his gospel. As men judge it difficult to comply with this injunction, so Christ calls it a 'strait gate'; and as but few in that age complied with the injunction, the opposite gate was said to be wide, and the way broad.

Israel walked in the broad road, and was destroyed; but she found help in the Lord after her destruction. And so may all sinners. 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.' (Hosea xiii. 9.) 'He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.' (Psal. cvii. 20.)

PARABLE OF THE GOOD AND CORRUPT TREES.

Matt. vii. 17—19. Luke vi. 43, 44.

'Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.'—Matt. vii. 17—19.

THIS parable bears a strong resemblance to that which occurs in Matt. iii. 10, the notes on which the reader will do well to peruse again. In the case before us Jesus was warning his followers against those false prophets, who came to the people in sheep's clothing, but within they were ravening wolves. (See verse 15.) The name of prophets is given in the Scriptures, not only to those who were appointed to foretel future events, but also to those

who were employed in delivering religious instruction of any kind, especially if they directed their labors to explain the precepts and doctrines of divine revelation. Jesus foretold, that the false prophets would come in sheeps' clothing, that is, they would come in the garb of innocence. Paul seems to refer to such, in Rom. xvi. 18 : ' For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' That they might not trust in these false pretences, Jesus kindly pointed out to them the proper criterion, by which they ought to judge of the professions of mankind. ' Ye shall know them by their *fruits*.' (Ver. 16.) That is, as truly as you may know the kind of a tree by the fruit which it bears, so may you know the real character of these prophets by their *works*. ' Do men gather grapes of thorns ? or figs of thistles ? ' Certainly not. ' Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.' If these prophets are true teachers and good men, they will teach true doctrines, and do good works. ' But a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.' (Ver. 17.) On the other hand, if these prophets are false teachers, and bad men, they will teach false doctrines, and do evil works. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, for ' a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' (Ver. 18. See also Luke vi. 45.) A terrible judgment awaits these false prophets, as well as all the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation. ' Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.' (Ver. 19.) The punishments which the house of Israel suffered, are represented under the figure of *fire*, in instances too numerous to be referred to in this place.

The figure employed in this parable was a common one among the Jews. Lightfoot quotes from Bab Berac, 'A gourd, is known by its branch.'* This criterion is an infallible one. A false prophet will not do good works ; he will not follow the examples of Christ ; if he should, it

* Works, xi. 153.

would make him a true prophet. The works of false prophets, as recorded in the Scriptures, were such as these : They were ravening wolves not sparing the flock : (Acts xx. 29.) Teachers of what they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake : (Titus i. 11.) Such as count gain, godlessness : (1 Tim. vi. 5.) Admiring persons for gain : (Jude 16.) Lovers of pleasure : (2 Tim. iii. 4.) Abominable : (Tit. i. 16.) Insisting upon questions, which had no tendency to increase godliness, but rather to nourish strife, and subvert the hearers : (1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 7 ; 2 Tim. ii. 16, 24 ; Tit. iii. 9.) In addition to these marks of false prophets, we may add, that they did their work *privately*, creeping into houses : (2 Peter ii. 1 ; Jude 4 ; 2 Tim. iii. 6.) They brought in damnable heresies, or heresies of destruction. Such as destroyed men's union and happiness : (2 Peter ii. 1.) Denied the Lord that bought them : (Jude 4.) Spoke 'great swelling words of vanity : ' (2 Peter ii. 18 ; Jude 16.) Uttered hard speeches against the Lord : (Jude 14, 15.) Used 'feigned words,' untrue stories : (2 Peter ii. 3.) Made merchandise of men : (2 Peter ii. 8.) Spoke evil of the things they *understood not* : (2 Peter ii. 12 ; Jude 10.) Turned the grace of God into lasciviousness : (Rom. vi. 1, 2 ; Jude 4.) Led captive silly women : (2 Tim. iii. 6 ; 2 Cor. xi. 3.) See how the apostles were obliged to guard against the evils they produced, in (1 Tim. v. 13 ; Titus ii. 1—6. By observing these marks, the people would know them to be false teachers, as infallibly as they would know a tree by its fruit, a gourd by its branch. Such false prophets brought upon themselves 'swift destruction,' (2 Peter ii. 1,) their 'judgment slumbered not,' (2 Peter ii. 3.) Like a bad or unfruitful tree, they were soon to be hewn down, and cast into the fire.

**PARABLE OF THE
WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDER.**

Matt. vii. 24—27. Luke vi. 47—49.

‘Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.’—Matt. vii. 24—27.

A KNOWLEDGE of the broken and hilly state of the country in Judea, of the manner of building, in the East, and of the violent tempests which sometimes happen there, is necessary to an understanding of this forcible similitude.

The floods spoken of here, saith Hammond, were ‘land floods, or torrents that arise from any tempestuous sudden rain: this is here meant, as it is joined to the descending of the rain, and blowing of the wind.’* Vinisauf, in his account of the crusade of King Richard to the Holy Land, speaks of the march of the army as follows: Describing their going to the foot of the hilly part of the country, toward Jerusalem, he says, that ‘at that time most heavy rains fell, and the air was very severe, so that very many of their beasts perished; that the rains, storms of hail, and winds, were so vehement, that the stakes of their tents were torn up, and carried to a distance.’† The same writer describes the preceding season as being very wet, ‘unheard of rains pouring down very frequently, nay continually, and causing destructive inundations.’‡ ‘Such

* Com. on the place.

† Ibid. i. 128.

‡ Harmer’s Ob. i. 127.

violent rains, in a hilly country especially, must occasion inundations very dangerous to buildings that happen to be placed within their reach, by washing away the soil from under them, and occasioning their fall.' *

We should take into consideration here, the manner in which buildings are frequently constructed in the East. The materials for the construction of edifices were originally stone and mud ; afterwards tiles, hardened by the heat of the sun, were used. The walls of common dwellings were built of such, laid on a foundation of stone ; but where the ground was solid, the foundation was omitted. (See Ezek. xiii. 5—7 ; xiii. 11—14.) † Calmet says, ‘The houses of the poorer class of people in the East, are very bad constructions, consisting of mud-walls, reeds, and rushes.’ To such Job seems to refer, when he says, (chap. iv. 19,) “God putteth no confidence in his angels ; how much less in them who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust ; who are crushed by a moth striking against them.” Such a house, ‡ only set as it were on the ground, would easily be swept away by one of those torrents, which in the rainy season burst from the hills.’ §

It will at once be perceived what terrible destruction, among such buildings, built on the loose soil, in exposed places, would be made by a violent storm of wind and rain, such as often happens in Judea. Kenrick very judi-

* Harmer's Ob. i. 147.

† Jahn's Arch. Sec. 39.

‡ Houses are built in this manner, even to the present day, in some parts of Asia. In a very recent work, the city of Tebriz, in Armenia, containing 60,000 inhabitants, is thus described. ‘Its houses are a mockery of every idea of oriental magnificence. In the style, to which we have found no exceptions since entering the valley of the Aras, they are of mud ; built either by throwing a handful of that material in a damp state irregularly upon another, or by first drying it in the form of bricks, and then arranging it in regular layers. The streets, except where the English have made sidewalks, as causeways through the mud to each other's houses, are unpaved. Not a window opens towards them, nor is hardly a house to be seen [being low and hidden by the walls.] As you pass along, nothing appears but naked mud walls, broken now and then by an irregular opening with a clumsy door,’ &c. Researches of Smith and Dwight in Armenia, ii. 145. They were in Armenia in 1830.

§ Robinson's Calmet, Art. House.

ciously remarks concerning this passage; that ‘the state of things in Judea, as described by travellers into that country, will illustrate the meaning of the comparison which our Lord here uses. The land of Canaan is described as a hilly, and extremely rocky country; but the rocks are frequently covered with a thin coat of earth or sand. The returns of rain in the winter season are not very frequent; but when it does rain, the water pours down with great violence, three or four days and nights together; so as to produce violent torrents in every part of the country. These violent rains in a hilly country must occasion inundations, endangering buildings which happen to be placed within their reach, by washing away the soil from under them, and occasioning their fall. This account shows us how we are to understand building on the sand, or loose soil, and the wise man’s digging down to the rock, before he laid the foundation of his building.’* ‘The houses in the East being formed frequently of mud, were but ill calculated to resist the effects of the impetuous torrent which descended from the mountains of Palestine. It should be remembered also, that *tornadoes* or *whirlwinds*, followed by lightning, thunder and rains, were very frequent during the winter and cold seasons. Eastern travellers describe the whirlwinds they have observed, as truly terrific. They carry in their vortex, sand, branches, the stubble of the fields, and not unfrequently buildings which have not been well secured at the foundation.’†

The following paragraph from Benson, on the parable before us, is worthy of being introduced in this place. ‘Let us carefully remember, that when Christ delivered this most instructive sermon to a numerous and large audience, upon a mountain in Galilee, they had in view a number of hills and mountains, all around them, and particularly Mount Tabor, as may appear from Maundrell’s Travels. On the side of Mount Tabor they might possibly discern the river Kishon, and other streams with their

* Kenrick’s Expos. on the place.

† Horne’s Intro. iii. 31, 65, 378. .

rolling floods, swiftly descending from other mountains down to the subjacent vallies. It is possible also that they might behold some houses built by wise men, upon the solid rock, houses that had stood for a long succession of years, or ages, unmoved by the flood, unshaken by stormy blasts ; and near the same might be some remains of the folly of fools ; I mean houses lying in ruins, whose foundation had been in the sand, which the flood could undermine, and the current as easily carry away. If so, what a lively picture, what animated instructions, did our Lord place before the minds and eyes of his numerous audience. But this is not the only instance, by many ; we have in the course of the Sermon on the Mount, frequent occasion to call our reader's attention to the instances of this manner of our Lord, viz. his taking the coloring of his language from some object then in view, or some conversation then lately passed. A more striking and agreeable method of instruction cannot easily be imagined.*

Jesus represented the man who heard his sayings, and did them, by him who built his house upon a rock, which the winds and floods could not carry away. He was *wise*; his morality was founded on just principles, and it had the firmest and the best support. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had placed the foundation of all moral rectitude in the character of God. (See Matt. v. 43—48 and vii. 11.) Here the universal love of God to the human race is appealed to by Jesus, as the reason why men should love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and pray for such as despitefully use them and persecute them. That men should love such as loved them, Jesus showed was not enough; he directed them to be perfect as their Father in heaven was perfect, viz. in loving their enemies. Thus he made the foundation of human rectitude to lie in the divine character. Now, those who obeyed Christ's commands were like a man who built his house on a rock ; they had a solid foundation for their morality ; they had a good reason for what

* Life of Christ, 398, 399.

they did ; and in every period of human life this *conduct* would stand justified. Not so with the man who heard the sayings of Christ, and did them not. Merely to hear these sayings, or to profess to believe them, would not suffice in the day of danger. Jesus instructed his followers, that their *conduct* must be right, and he had given them a rule by which they might always know when it was right. ‘Not every one,’ said he, ‘that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.’ (Ver. 21.) In the ‘day’ of vengeance which came upon the Jews, many said, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?’ He represents himself as replying, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’ (Vers. 22, 23.) They were carried away by the torrent of divine judgments which were sent on that nation. They were loud in their professions of love to Christ, but they did not obey his injunctions. Of course their foundation was insecure, and the floods swept them away. In this way, were they like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand: they were warned of the approaching desolation,—the *flood* of evils that was about to break upon the nation; but they were resting upon their professions, upon crying ‘Lord, Lord,’ upon having done *wonderful works* in his name. It was a sandy foundation; for those only who did the will of God were safe, as resting on the true foundation.

PARABLE OF THE BRUISED REED.

Matt. xii. 20.

'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall be not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.'

We shall easily obtain the true application of this metaphor, if we take the context into consideration. Commencing at the 14th verse, we read as follows: 'Then the Pharisees went out, and held counsel against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence; and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; *and charged them that they should not make it known*; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esajas the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.' (Isa. xlvi. 1—3.) In the true spirit of humility, Jesus charged those who were the happy subjects of his miraculous works, that they should not blazon abroad the wonders he performed: he preferred to do his good deeds in retirement, to pour out blessings unostentatiously upon mankind, and enjoy as his reward, not the praise of men, but the approbation of his conscience, and of him 'who seeth in secret.' With what satisfaction must every christian reflect on this trait in the character of his Master, when contrasted with the pride and ostentation of the Pharisees. Although Jesus frequently rebuked them in strong language, it is easily perceived that the rebuke of his example was still more severe.

In order to show the impropriety of calling public attention, in that age, to himself, any farther than it was absolutely unavoidable, the blessed Jesus referred to a portion of the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the prophet had made reference to him. '*He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*' He was to pass unostentatiously through the world; and as he never boasted of his benevolent deeds, so he charged his disciples to 'tell no man;' but to leave *the works* to give testimony of themselves. 'If I do not *the works* of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe *the works*; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.' (John x. 37, 38.)

In the same spirit Jesus declared his intention to seek the most obscure, broken-hearted, and perishing individuals; not to add sorrow to their sorrow, but to restore them. '*A bruised reed* shall he not break, and *smoking flax* shall he not quench.' The reed that was bruised he would not destroy, but endeavor to restore it; and the flax so nearly extinguished that it emitted nothing but smoke, he would not quench. The phrase here rendered 'smoking flax,' Dr. Campbell translates, '*a dimly burning taper.*'* Adam Clarke says it means the wick of a lamp in an expiring state, when the oil has been all burnt away from it, and nothing is left but a mere snuff emitting smoke. † 'This expression,' saith Bishop Pearce, 'means that he shall be so gentle, as not to hurt even that which is of itself ready to perish. The Jews used flax as we now do cotton, for candles, or in lamps. This, a little before it is quite extinguished, gives more smoke than flame, and therefore this sense seems a proper one.'‡ To the same purport is Knatchbull's annotation, who closes by saying, 'that to speak to the capacity of the vulgar, it ought to be translated thus: *He will not extinguish, or put out, the dying lamp.*' 'Wilt thou break a

* Four Gospels.

† Com. on the place.

‡ Com. on the place.

leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?' (Job xiii. 25.) * Whitby's comment is equally interesting. 'Here, saith St. Jerome, *Qui peccatori non porrigit manum, et qui non portat onus fratris sui*, he that stretcheth not forth his hand to the sinner, and he that beareth not the burthen of his brother, he breaks the bruised reed; *et qui modicam scintillam fidei contemnit in paroulis*, and he that contemneth the small spark of faith in little ones, quenches the smoking flax.' † The first of these expressions, 'a bruised reed shall he not break,' denotes that the gentleness of Christ was so great that he would not hurt even that which of itself was ready to perish. The second, 'and smoking flax shall he not quench,' was intended to signify the same thing in different words, agreeably to the practice of the Hebrew writers.

The whole life of Jesus Christ may be appealed to, as an evidence that the prophecy in regard to him was just. To mourners he was always consoling; to the oppressed he gave deliverance; to those afflicted with grievous diseases, so that they were just ready to perish, he gave health: and the wicked, the poor abandoned sinner, he did not despise. O my blessed Lord! how amiable is thy character in my sight. When the malicious Pharisees brought to thee the woman guilty of a violation of the law of Moses, thou didst not upbraid; thou didst kindly say, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.' (John viii. 11.) When the woman who was a sinner, intruded herself upon thee, with a trembling step, in the house of Simon; when, having heard the common report of thy tenderness to the unfortunate, she came, bursting with grief and penitence, and washed thy feet with her tears, thou didst not spurn her from thy presence, but in mercy saidst—'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' (Luke vii. 48.) May we have more of thy disposition, and

* Knatchbull's Annot.

† Com. on the place. See also Robinson's Calmet, p. 437.

learn what it is to be ‘kind to the unthankful and to the evil.’ (Luke vi. 35.)

We find that the principal prophecies in regard to Christ, are in harmony with what we have now said. ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.’ (Psal. cxlvii. 3.) When on earth, Jesus quoted and applied the following passage to himself: ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the *poor*; he hath sent me to heal the *broken hearted*, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them *that are bruised*.’ (Isa. lxi. 1, and Luke iv. 18.) This passage is a beautiful illustration of the parable under consideration.

‘*Till he send forth judgment unto victory.*’ ‘The Heb. and LXX. in Esai. read it thus: *He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*’ The words in both places mean thus much, That Christ should make no sound in the world, or noise of pomp, or applause, or state, but should manage his affairs in humility, silence, poverty and patience, both while he himself was on earth, and by his apostles, after his ascension, laboring under contempt, poverty and persecution; but at last he *shall bring forth judgment to victory*, i. e. that he should break forth and show himself a judge, avenger and conqueror, against that most wicked nation of the Jews, from whom both he and his, suffered such things; and then also *he sent forth judgment unto truth*, and asserted himself the true Messias, and the Son of God, before the eyes of all; and confirmed the truth of the gospel, by avenging his cause upon his enemies, in a manner so conspicuous and so dreadful. And hence it is that that sending forth and execution of judgment against that nation, is almost always called in the New Testament *his coming in glory*. When Christ and his kingdom had so long lain hid under the veil of humility, and the cloud of persecution, at last he brake forth a revenger, and cut off that persecuting nation, and showed himself a conqueror before the eyes of all, both Jews and Gentiles. Let it be observed in the text before us, how, after the mention of

that judgment and victory (against the Jews) presently follows, *And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.**

PARABLE OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT.

Matt. xii. 43—45.

'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.'

IN this parable, the Saviour referred to the opinion entertained by the Jews, and which they had derived from their association with the heathen nations, that persons were sometimes possessed by demons, or evil spirits; that is to say, that these spirits influenced them so far as to control their actions, and make them subject to extreme pains. There is the clearest evidence that the heathen attributed disorders, especially such as affected the mind, to the influence of evil spirits, who had *in reality* no existence or power, but were, like the rest of the heathen deities, imaginary beings. It ought to be distinctly understood, that the demons by which men are said, in the New Testament, to be possessed, were a very different order of beings from the Devil, or Satan, commonly so called. It is never said by the sacred writers, that men were possessed by *the devil*: whether the doctrine of real possessions be true or false, it is not *the devil* by whom men were possessed, but another order of beings, called *demons*. Dr. Campbell has labored with great effect to

* Lightfoot's Works, xi. 194.

illustrate this fact.* Demons are always spoken of in reference to possessions ; but the devil is never so spoken of. It devolves on us, in this place, to show the reason why Jesus spoke of persons as being possessed by demons.

From the earliest ages, the heathen supposed invisible spirits to have agency in the affairs of this world. They peopled the skies with the departed spirits of their heroes, to whom they assigned divers ranks, dispositions, and occupations ; some they adored with gratitude, and others they worshipped with fear. This was all the work of imagination—it had no reality. They unquestionably believed it real ; and when they experienced any extraordinary emotions, they were wont to attribute them to the agency of their *fabled* demons. This absurd notion was embraced by the Jews, as we learn from their historians ; and Josephus, who lived nearly in the same age with the apostles, tells us, that demons are the spirits of wicked men, which return to the earth, and possess and torment the living. † This was the prevailing opinion in the time of Christ. Persons afflicted with insanity and epilepsy were more particularly judged to be possessed of demons ; and the careful reader will perceive, by examining the supposed cases of possessions recorded in the New Testament, that the symptoms put forth by the subjects of them, are precisely the symptoms shown by persons really afflicted with those diseases. ‡ The Saviour, in speaking of persons thus afflicted, used the common language ; not, as we suppose, to give countenance to the notion of the real existence of *demons*, but in tenderness, perhaps, to the persons afflicted, and in accommodation to their views of themselves, as well as to the prevailing opinion on the

* Prelim. Dis. vi. 1.

† Speaking of a certain plant, he says, ‘It is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to the sick persons, it quickly drives away those called *demons*, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them.’ Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. vi. sec. 3.

‡ See Jahn’s Arch. Sec. 194—197.

subject. When Jesus cured people of insanity or epilepsy, he was said to cast out a demon, or demons, if the possessed thought himself to have more than one; and when Jesus transferred the madness, on one occasion, to a herd of swine, as the leprosy of Naaman was transferred to Gehazi, the demons were said to enter them, and their end was what might have been expected.

Dr. Lightfoot remarks on this subject, ‘These words seem to have been spoken by our Saviour according to the capacity of the common people, or rather according to the deceit put upon them, more than according to the reality or truth of the thing itself; taking a parable from something commonly believed and entertained, that he might express the thing which he propounded, more plainly and familiarly.’*

But it may be objected to this, that such language would not be used in relation to a disease—that if the persons spoken of were not really possessed of demons, the language of the Bible is calculated to deceive us. To this we reply again, as follows:

1. Nobody now believes in possession by *demons*, i. e. the spirits of the human dead returned to earth. This is universally regarded as an exploded heathen notion. But possession by *διαβολος*, the devil, was as little known to the heathen, or the Jews, as *possession* by the spirits of the human dead is to us.

2. We must interpret the language of the Bible according to what we know of the opinions of the Jews at the time it was spoken.

3. If Christ intended to speak of possession by *διαβολος*, the devil, his language was certainly deceptive; for the Jews would have applied it to possession by demons; the spirits of the human dead. *Diabolical* possession, and *demonic* possession are two very different doctrines. It cannot be pardoned in those who hold to *diabolical* possession to say, if our views are correct, the language of Jesus was deceptive, since it was certainly

* Works, xi. 203.

deceptive if *their* views are correct ; for the Jews never learned the doctrine of *diabolical* possession from it, as they never held that doctrine in the sense we now speak of it.

4. Similar language is used in reference to other diseases. (See Luke iv. 38, 39.) ‘And Simon’s wife’s mother was taken with a *great fever*; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and *rebuked the fever*, and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.’ Here Jesus cast out the *fever*, as in the other case he cast out the *insanity*; and we do not see why any one cannot make out the *fever* to be a real *demon* as well as the insanity. By comparing verses 40, 41 of the same chapter, it will be further seen that the demons were diseases which Jesus healed at his word. ‘All they that had sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.’ And then to show how some were healed of their *diseases*, it is added, ‘And demons came out of many, crying, &c.’ Does not this show that the casting out the demons was healing the disease?

The parable under consideration is founded on the prevailing opinion of *demons*. The unclean spirit was said to leave a man, to walk through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. He concluded to return to the man whom he had left, and he found him in a better condition than when he left him; or, as it is expressed, ‘he returned to the house whence he came out, and found it empty, swept and garnished.’ He went and took with him seven spirits worse than himself, and they entered in and dwelt there, and the last state of the man was, of course, worse than the first. Jesus made the application of the parable by saying, ‘*Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*’

It was commonly supposed that if the insanity left a man for a time, but returned, it came with seven-fold violence, which is all that is meant by ‘seven other spirits.’ We say at the present day, when a fever is expelled, that if the person is not careful, the disease will return, and the

relapse is seven times more difficult to cure than the first attack. The same rule holds good, in regard to moral things. Peter says, ‘For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.’ (2 Peter ii. 20.) The occasion of Jesus using the parable before us was this,—he had just cured a man of blindness and dumbness, or, in the common language, had cast out a demon that was both blind and dumb; and this circumstance suggested to him the figure by which he represented what, it might reasonably be supposed, would be the last state of the Jews. They were earnestly looking for the coming of the *latter* days, in which they hoped to enjoy all the glory foretold by their prophets. This *latter state* of the nation was a matter of universal and joyful expectation among them; but alas! by rejecting the true Messiah, and putting him to death, they brought upon themselves, in the *end* of the age, a great tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning of the world to that time, and was never afterward to be equalled. The ‘last state’ of that generation, instead of being, as they expected, better than any former condition they had ever enjoyed, would be worse—no calamities they ever suffered would compare with those about to fall upon them.

The Jews had, in some degree, been benefited by the preaching of Christ; but still they would relapse into their former condition, and indeed into a worse condition than they had been in before. We find the true idea in the Assembly’s Annotations on the passage. ‘The Jews having been in some sort freed from Satan’s dominion, by Christ’s abode among them, his doctrine and miracles; so that being now willing to destroy Christ and to entertain Satan again, he intimateth that they shall be like a repossessed man, ten-fold more children of the devil than before.’ (See Heb. vi. 4—6.)

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Matt. xiii. 3—8. Mark iv. 3—8. Luke viii. 5—8.

‘Behold a sower went forth to sow: And, when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had not deepness of earth: And, when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away: And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.’—Matt. xiii. 3—8.

AT the commencement of Matt. xiii. it is said, that Jesus ‘sat by the sea side, and great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore.’ (Vers. 1, 2.) ‘So was the manner of the nation,’ says Lightfoot, ‘that the masters, when they read their lectures, sat, and the scholars stood; which honorary custom continued to the death of Gamaliel the Elder,—and then so far ceased, that the scholars sat, when their masters sat.’* (Compare Luke iv. 16, with 20. See also Matt. v. 1; xxiii. 2.)

Jesus drew the parable before us, as he did many others, from the pastoral occupations of the Jews. It may appear unnatural to some, that he should represent the seed which fell into good ground, as bringing forth fruit even to a hundred fold. This was a large increase. But it should be remembered, that the land of Judea was very fertile; (See Deut. viii. 7, 8.) and that a crop of an hundred fold was sometimes obtained. (See Gen. xxvi. 12.) ‘Herodotus, Strabo, and Pliny mentioned the increase of crops at the rate of one hundred and fifty, two hundred, and even three

* Works, xi. 203; also, iii. 112; v. 136.

hundred fold. This great increase is owing to the circumstance of the kernels being put into the soil at a distance from each other, so as to send out several stalks, (Gen. xli. 5, 47,) some of which (according to Pliny, N. H. xviii. 21, 55,) have from three to four hundred ears ; and in Africa, at the present time, they bear at least ten and fifteen.* It is not uncommon, even in our own country, to obtain a crop of a hundred fold from some grain.

If we observe the manner in which the fields in Palestine were laid out and divided, we shall see a very good reason why some seeds fell by the way side, which, not being covered by the soil, were picked up by the birds. Lightfoot remarks, ‘There were ways and paths, as well common as more private, along the sown fields. (See Matt. xii. 1.) Hence, in the tract ‘Peah,’ where they dispute what those things are which divide a field, so that it owes a double corner to the poor,—thus it is determined, “These things divide; a river, an aqueduct, a private way, a common way, a common path and a private path.”’† Intersected with ways and paths, as we thus see the fields of Judea were, which were trodden continually, it would be natural, in sowing the seed, that some should fall on these paths, or by the side of them, and thus be exposed to be picked up by the birds. Some parts of the land of Judea were very rocky; and to encourage the cultivation of such places, the person was freed from certain restrictions ‘who sowed his seed by the sea, upon rocks, shelves, and rocky places.’‡

Previously to attempting a particular explanation of the parable, there is one circumstance which we think worthy of the reader’s attention. By the seed sown, was intended the word of God, and by the soil into which it was cast, the hearts and understandings of men. Now as there is no contradiction in nature between the seed and the soil, so we infer, that the nature of the human heart is not opposed to the gospel of Christ. If men are totally opposed

* Jahn’s Arch. p. 71.

† Works, xi. 204.

‡ Works, xi. 285.

to the gospel, in their natures, previously to their conversion, it is but a poor figure the Saviour uses, when he represents his word by *the seed*, and the hearts and understandings of men, by *the soil* in which it is sown. Bulkley, in his work on the parables, has, we think, well remarked, ‘That according to the representaion of this parable, the knowledge of religion is natural to all mankind; the seed of it is sown in the bad ground as well as in the good; it is not the acquisition only of a few thoughtful and contemplative men, but arises directly and immediately from certain principles and powers, essentially belonging to the human frame, so that no man can have it to say, he did not bring forth fruit, because the seeds of it, the principles of religious knowledge, were never sown in his mind. Secondly, we may observe, that among the various bad soils here mentioned by our Saviour, there are none of them described as being naturally bad; if, therefore, our minds are in a religious and moral sense unfruitful, this is owing to our own corruption of them, and not to any inherent depravity or barrenness in the soil itself.’

The great object of Jesus in uttering the parable of the Sower, was to show the different ways in which the truth would be received by different orders of men. The explanation, as given by our Lord himself, will be found in vers. 18—23. The seed was sown under four different circumstances, and, in the explanation, Jesus showed that there were four different kinds of hearers of the word.

1. There were those who heard the word, *but did not understand it.* (Ver. 19.) The word preached to them was the seed which fell by the way side, and which the fowls of the air came and devoured. Hence it is said, that when the word is preached to a man who did not *understand* it, then cometh the wicked, * and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. It was not difficult for the wicked enemies of Jesus to take away the word of the gospel from the hearts of those who did not understand it. Their great object was to prevent men

* The word *one*, being supplied by the translators, I omit.

from embracing the religion of the blessed Redeemer. They took away the key of knowledge from the people,—they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither entering themselves, nor suffering those who would enter to go in; and they were represented by the fowls who came and devoured the seed.

2. There were those who heard the word, and received it with joy; but they were men of instability, and endured only for a while; for when tribulation or persecution arose on account of the word they had professed, they became offended and gave it up. When the word was preached to this class, it was represented by the seed which fell upon stony places, where there was but little earth. It sprang quickly up, as seed does when slightly covered, and having but little root, it could not endure the scorching rays of the sun, and, of course, withered away. This certainly was a beautiful figure by which to represent those who, to use the apostle's expression, were not 'rooted and grounded' in the faith. (Eph. iii. 17; Col. ii. 7.)

3. There were those who heard the word, and who became unfruitful, because the care of this *world*, and the deceitfulness of *riches*, choked it, and prevented its growth in their minds. When preached to them, it was represented by the seed sown among thorns, which the thorns sprung up and choked. *Care*, in this case, signifies *anxiety*, and is rendered by Bp. Pearce 'anxious care,' who refers to Matt. vi. 25.

4. There were those who heard the word, and *understood it*, in whose hearts it bore fruit, to some in a greater, to others in a less proportion. The word to them was like seed sown in good ground, which 'brought forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.' It is a similar figure which Jesus uses, when he says, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' (John xv. 5.)

In drawing moral instruction from this parable, it should be remarked, that we here perceive the way in which *the*

truth is received by different classes of men, and the reasons by which some men are induced to renounce and abandon *the truth*. All the seed that was sown, was represented as being good seed. That which was sown by the way side did not germinate, because it was caught away by the fowls ; that which fell in stony places sprang up, and withered only for want of soil ; that which fell among thorns, was good seed, and would have borne fruit, had it not been choked ; while that which fell into good ground was no better seed, but it bore fruit, even to an hundred fold, on account of the soil into which it was received. The word of truth met with all these different kinds of reception ; and it may be remarked, that the truth meets with the same reception now, as the experience of every true preacher of the gospel will enable him to testify.

In the first place, there are at the present day, the ‘way-side’ hearers—those *who do not understand what they hear*. No lasting impression can be made on such persons. If they profess to have received the truth, they never can defend it ; they cannot give a reason of the hope that is in them ; and they are continually liable to abandon the cause they may have espoused. The enemies of the truth will find them fit subjects for deception, and they will artfully catch away from their hearts what little of truth they may have in remembrance, as the fowls caught away the seed from the way side.

There are those again who hear the word, and receive it with great joy and zeal at first; but they do not *understand* it ; the root of the matter is not in them ; and they endure only for a while. Opposition causes them to tremble. Not having the love of truth in their hearts, they know not how to suffer any thing in its defence ; and ‘when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word,’ they are offended, and they abandon the cause which they at first embraced with so great joy. And here it should be remarked, that these people will never acknowledge the real reasons why they profess to renounce the truth : they will not say that it is on account

of the opposition with which they meet, and that they are offended because tribulation and persecution arise. No, but Jesus makes manifest the real reason, why such renounce the truth—they have not sufficient magnanimity and courage, and devotion to truth to endure tribulation and persecution.

In the third place, there are those who hear the word, but in whom the love of the world predominates. ‘The care of *this world*, and the deceitfulness of *riches* choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.’ Are there not many such at the present time—men who cannot defend the truth, because it interferes with their worldly interest, and their money-making concerns? Such may at first receive the word; but their love of the world, and the power that riches have over them, choke it, and they abandon it. This is no disgrace to the truth itself, and never should weaken our confidence in it. Such men would be as likely to renounce the truth as any thing else, if it interfered with their mere worldly interests. Gain is the only god they worship, and any thing that deprives them of this they cannot endure.

Lastly, we find those in this age of the world, who hear the word, and *understand* it. The word in them is the seed sown in good ground. They understand it well, they know the evidences on which it is founded, they can see the fallacy of the objections brought against it, and they cannot be persuaded to give it up. The opposers of the truth cannot uproot it from their hearts; they are willing to suffer shame, tribulation and persecution for the name of Christ; and as they love the truth above every thing else, so no worldly consideration can induce them to abandon it. It bears fruit in their hearts, ‘some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.’ And it is worthy of remark here, that the fruit which the word brings forth is always like itself. ‘Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.’ A doctrine of love, will bear the fruit of love; a doctrine of joy will bear the fruit of joy; a doctrine of peace, like Christianity, which is *peace* on earth, and good will to men, will bear the fruit of peace;

and hence Paul saith, ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c.’ (Gal. v. 22) In Peter the word bore the fruit of joy, even an hundred fold, for believing, he ‘rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ (1 Peter i. 8.) Reader, may it be your happy lot to receive and understand the word of God; may you be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, and may you enjoy those rich consolations of ‘the gospel of the blessed God’ which the world can neither give nor take away.

PARABLE OF THE TARES OF THE FIELD.

Matt. xiii. 24—30.

‘Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.’

‘It is not easy to decide,’ says Calmet, ‘whether by the term *ζιζανία*, in Matt. xiii. 25, the Saviour intends indifferently all plants which grow among grain, or some particular species. All we are certain of, from the circumstances of the parable, is that it is a plant which rises to the height of the grain. Mintert says, “It is a plant in appearance not unlike wheat, having at first the same kind of stalk, and the same viridity, but bringing forth no fruit, at least none that is good.” John Melchior says, *Zizania* is a particular species of weed, known in Canaan, not

unlike wheat. Forskall says, the darnel (called in the Arabian tongue *Zizania*) is well known to the people of Aleppo. It grows among corn. If the seeds remain mixed with the meal, they render a man drunk by eating the bread. *The reapers do not separate the plant*, but after threshing they reject the seeds by means of a fan, or seive.* Proudfit says, ‘The word which we translate *tares*, occurs several times in this chapter, but, so far as I recollect, is used in no other instance in the New Testament. The *tares* are represented by naturalists, as a ‘ plant with a long rough leaf, not easily distinguished from the genuine grain among which it grows. It was very common in Palestine, and particularly pernicious to their crops of corn.’†

This parable, like the preceding, was delivered to the multitudes, who gathered together to listen to the instructions of Christ. After Jesus had sent them away, his disciples came to him with the request, that he would declare unto them the parable of the tares of the field. (Ver. 36.) On this circumstance Proudfit remarks, ‘No sooner, therefore, had our Lord dismissed the multitude, and retired into a private house, than his disciples followed him, with a request that he would declare to them the parable of the tares of the field. Such is the familiarity which a people ought ever to manifest towards their pastor. When anything in his discourse appears dark and mysterious, they ought to embrace a proper opportunity for asking an illustration; in circumstances of perplexity and doubt, they ought freely to make known their anxieties.’‡

The Saviour, as will be seen by a reference to vers. 37—43, of this chapter, has explained this parable; and it will, therefore, be highly proper that we make use of his explanation in coming to a right understanding of it. But as divines and commentators have differed widely in understanding the *explanation* as well as the *parable itself*, it will be our endeavor to elucidate the terms employed by

* Calmet’s Dictionary, Art. *Tares*.

† Lectures on Par. p. 54.

‡ Lec. on Par. p. 45.

a comparison of them with instances of their use, in other parts of the Bible.

1. He that sowed the good seed was the Son of man. To whom did Jesus here refer?

2. The field is the world, (*κοσμός*.) What is the signification of the word *world*, in this instance?

3. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. Who are to be regarded as the ‘children of the kingdom?’

4. The tares are the children of the wicked one.* Who are signified by the children of the wicked one?

5. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. What is here meant by the devil?

6. The harvest is the end of the world, (*αἰών*.) (Vers. 39, 40.) What sense does the word *world* bear in this case?

7. The reapers are the angels. What is meant by angels here?

8. Those signified by the tares were to be cast into a ‘furnace of fire.’ (Ver. 42.) What is signified by this furnace of fire?

9. The righteous, after the destruction of the wicked, were to shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who were these righteous?

1. In regard to the first question there will be no dispute, that by the Son of man Jesus intended himself. This was one of the common terms by which he made himself known.

2. The field in which the tares and wheat were both planted, was *the world*. Here the word *world* is a translation of the Greek word *κοσμός*, which usually signifies the material universe; and *world*, therefore, is to be understood in its usual sense, in the instance before us.

3. It next devolves on us to consider who are intended by the ‘children of the kingdom.’ It is a fact well known to every biblical student, that the Hebrews made a peculiar use of the terms *son* and *child*, and adopted them to signify any kind, and almost every kind of relation what-

* The word *one* is here supplied by the translators, and may, of course, be omitted, if we think the sense does not require it.

soever.* Hence ‘children of the kingdom’ may signify either those to whom the kingdom was preached, or those who had actually embraced the gospel, and entered into it. In Matt. viii. 12, we read that the ‘children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness.’ Here the *unbelieving* Jews are called the ‘children of the kingdom,’ because the kingdom of Christ was designed first for the Jews, and preached first to them; and hence, when the woman of Cana came to Jesus, he declared that he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that it was not meet ‘to take *the children’s* bread and cast it to dogs.’ (Matt. xv. 24, 26.) We know of but one

* The following passage from Prof. Stuart’s Letters to the Rev. Dr. Miller, is the best illustration we can offer in support of what is here said.

‘The word son was a favorite one among the Hebrews and was employed by them to designate a great variety of relations. The son of any thing, according to oriental idiom, may be either what is closely connected with, dependent on, like it, the consequence of it, worthy of it, &c. But this view of the subject must be explained by actual examples from the Scriptures. The following, I have selected from the Old and New Testaments.

“‘The son of eight days,’ i. e. the child that is eight days old; ‘the son of one hundred years,’ i. e. the person who is one hundred years of age; ‘the son of a year,’ i. e. a yearling; ‘the son of my sorrowing,’ i. e. one who has caused me distress; ‘the son of my right hand,’ i. e. one who will assist, or be a help to me; ‘son of old age,’ i. e. begotten in old age; ‘son of valor,’ i. e. bold, brave; ‘son of Belial, [literally, son of good-for-nothing] i. e. a worthless man; ‘son of wickedness,’ i. e. wicked; ‘son of a murderer,’ i. e. a murderous person; ‘son of my vows,’ i. e. son that answers to my vows; ‘son of death,’ i. e. one that deserves death; ‘son of perdition,’ i. e. one that deserves perdition; ‘son of smiting,’ i. e. one that deserves stripes; ‘son of Gehenna,’ i. e. one that deserves Gehenna; ‘son of consolation,’ i. e. one fitted to administer consolation; ‘son of thunder,’ i. e. a man of powerful energetic eloquence or strength; ‘son of peace,’ i. e. a peaceable man; ‘son of the morning,’ i. e. the morning star; ‘son of the burning coal,’ i. e. sparks of fire; ‘son of the bow,’ i. e. an arrow, ‘son of the threshing floor,’ i. e. grain; ‘son of oil,’ i. e. fat; ‘son of the house,’ i. e. a domestic slave; ‘son of man,’ i. e. man as it is usually applied, but perhaps in a sense somewhat diverse in several respects as applied to our Saviour. Such is the wide extent of relation, similarity, connexion, &c. which the term ‘son’ is employed to designate in the Hebrew, and in the idiom of the New Testament; a latitude far greater than is given to it in occidental language, and which no one who is not conversant with the Hebrew, can scarcely estimate in an adequate manner.”

other sense which we can affix to the phrase ‘children of the kingdom,’ in the parable before us—it must signify those who had actually and heartily embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ, and who are said (Matt. xxv. 34,) ‘to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.’

4. The tares represented the children of wickedness, which, as we have shown, simply signifies wicked persons.* These were such as had been incorporated into the church, and mixed with the sincere followers of Christ, and we find them referred to under various figures, in several of his parables. ‘At the time the Son of man sent forth his angels, they were to gather *out of his kingdom* all things which offend, and them which do iniquity,’ which plainly shows that Jesus intended such persons as had professed to know him, but were unfaithful disciples.

There seems to be some difficulty in understanding what the Saviour meant by the seed, whether he intended *doctrines*, or whether he intended *men*. If we say he intended *doctrines*, how shall they wail and gnash their teeth, when cast into a furnace of fire? If we say he meant *men*, it is asked, did the devil sow wicked men? did he create them? and who were those that slept while the enemy sowed the tares? Either interpretation is attended with difficulties, unless we allow, what to me seems probable, that Jesus identified both the errors and those who received them under the figure of the tares, and the truth and those also who believed it under the figure of the wheat. In the parable of the Sower, by seed is certainly meant the doctrine of Christ. So in the first part of the parable of the tares, it appears to have the same signification. ‘He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.’ But from doctrines the Saviour changes to those who receive them, and passes almost insensibly from one to the other. This view of the subject (and we certainly see no serious objections to it) removes the dif-

* *Les enfans du Mechant, c. a. d. du Diable, ceux qui sont les imitateurs de sa mechancete, et les instrumens de ses mauvais desseins. Beausobre et L'Enfant.*

ficulties which we have suggested, and enables us to explain the parable consistently in all its parts.

5. Who did Jesus mean by the *devil*, that incorporated the children of wickedness with his sincere and faithful followers? The Greek word *διαβολός* signified an adversary in general; and was very often applied to human beings, instances of which are frequently occurring in the New Testament. In the instance before us, we suppose it to refer to that perverse and wicked spirit, so opposite to the true spirit of Christ, which led men to say ‘Lord, Lord,’ while they performed not the will of God, and which induced them to profess to serve a master to whom they were not faithful.*

6. To what time did Jesus refer by ‘the harvest,’ which he declared was the ‘end of the world?’ In the style of the sacred writers, any consummation, when men may be said to be *ripe* for any purpose, is called the harvest. (Thus Jer. viii. 20; Joel iii. 13;) ‘Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow; for the wickedness is great, &c.’ (Matt. ix. 37, 38; also Rev. xiv. 15.)

By the answer to this question, it is settled whether the event of this parable refer to the future existence of mankind, or whether it had its proper fulfilment at the time of the destruction of the Jewish state. The phrase rendered ‘end of the world’ is *συντελεία των αιώνων*, and signifies literally, *the conclusion of the age*.† The same

* ‘The devil,’ says Dr. Smith, ‘is not only the name of one particular thing, but a nature. He is not so much one particular being designed to torment wicked men in the world to come, as a hellish and diabolical nature seated in the minds of men. He is not only one apostate spirit fallen down from heaven out of the lap of blessedness, but also a spirit of apostacy, a degenerate and depraved nature. Wheresoever we see malice, revenge, pride, envy, hatred, self-will and self-love, we may say, here and there is that evil spirit. Those filthy lusts and corruptions which men foment and entertain in their minds, they are the noisome vapors that ascend out of the bottomless pit; they are the thick mists and fogs of hellish darkness arising in their souls, as a preface and introduction of hell and death within.’ Select Discourses, pp. 463, 464.

† Locke, on 1 Cor. x. 11, says, ‘I think *τα τέλη των αιώνων* should be rendered the ends of the *ages*, and not contrary to grammar, the

expression occurs Heb. ix. 26, where we read that Jesus appeared, *at the conclusion of the age*, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. As Christianity may be said to have begun when the Jewish religion ended, so Christ is said to have appeared at the end of the Jewish age. The apostle Paul stated, that the end of the age had happened in his day, ‘Upon whom the *ends of the ages* (*τα τέλη των αιώνων*) are come.’ (1 Cor. x. 11.) The same subject is again spoken of Matt. xxiv. 3, where we are informed, that the disciples asked the Saviour, what should be the sign of his coming, and of the conclusion of the age, (*συντελεία τοῦ αἰώνος*.) He speaks of the end of that age, in verses 6, 13, 14 of the same chapter, and after pointing them to such signs as would infallibly enable them to discern its approach, he adds, (ver. 33,)

end of the world; because it is certain that *τέλη* and *συντελεία τοῦ αἰώνος*, or *των αιώνων*, cannot signify every where as we render it, “the end of the world,” which denotes but one certain period of time, for the world can have but one end; whereas those words signify in different places different periods of time, as will be manifest to any one who will compare these texts where they occur, viz. Matt. xiii. 39, 40; xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. x. 11; and Heb. ix. 26. It may be worth while, therefore, to consider whether *αἰών* hath not ordinarily a more natural signification in the New Testament, by standing for a considerable length of time, passing under some one remarkable dispensation.’ See his notes also on Gal. i. 4; Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. ii. 2; Phil. iii. 11; See also Whitby on Heb. vi. 5. Beausobre and L’Enfant say, *end of the age* (siecle.) ‘C'est une expression Hebraïque souvent employée dans le Nouveau Tes. Voyez Heb. i. 2.’ See their comment on Matt. xiii. 39. Bp. Porteus says, on Matt. xxiv. 3, ‘the expressions *the sign of thy coming*, and *the end of the world*, at the first view naturally lead our thoughts to the coming of Christ at the day of judgment, and the final dissolution of this earthly globe. But a due attention to the parallel passages in St. Mark and St. Luke, and a critical examination into the real import of those two phrases in various parts of Scripture, will soon convince a careful inquirer, that by the *coming of Christ* is here meant, not his coming to judge the world at the last day, but his coming to execute judgment upon Jerusalem; and that by *the end of the world* is to be understood, not the final consummation of all things here below, but the *end of that age*, the end of the Jewish state and polity; the subversion of their city, temple and government.’ He adds in a note, ‘the word *αἰών* (here translated the world) frequently means nothing more than an age, a certain definite period of time. See Matt. xxiv. 6, 14; Mark xiii. 7; Luke xxi. 9, compared with ver. 20; Heb. ix. 26.’ Lectures on Matt. Phil. ed. 1829, p. 249.

'Verily I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*' On the strength of this testimony, plain, clear and incontrovertible, we say that the 'harvest' took place at the conclusion of the Mosaic age; and we add, that there is not an instance in the New Testament, in which the Greek phrase, rendered 'end of the world' in the parable on which we are remarking, has any other signification. It never should be forgotten, that the 'end of the world,' (vers. 39, 40,) at which the harvest was to take place, was not the end of *κόσμος*, the world said to be *the field*, but the end of *αἰών*, the age, and unquestionably referred to the conclusion of the Jewish state. But that we have assigned 'the harvest' to the proper time, will be made more evident by the next particular to be noticed. *

* To show that this interpretation of the parable is not peculiar to the denomination of Christians to which the author is well known to belong, the attention of the reader is invited to the following facts:

Dr. Hammond, a most loyal member of the English church, who flourished nearly two centuries ago, translates the phrase *συντελεία τε αἰώνος*, 'conclusion of the age'; and he makes it refer primarily to the solemn and approaching time of the visitation of the Jews. *Paraphrase and Annotations on the place.*

Adam Clarke, who as every body knows was zealously devoted to the doctrines of the Methodist church, closes his remarks on the parable by saying, 'Some learned men are of opinion, that the whole of this parable refers to the Jewish state and people; and that the words *συντελεία τε αἰώνος*, which are commonly translated *the end of the world*, should be rendered the *end of the age*, viz. the end of the Jewish polity. That the words have this meaning in other places, there can be no doubt; and this may be their *primary meaning* here: but he adds that there are some particulars in the parable which agree better with the consummation of all things; though he does not tell us what those particulars are. Com. on the place.'

The great commentator Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, translates *συντελεία τε αἰώνος*, in the case before us, 'end of this age, viz. that of the Jewish dispensation.' 'This is spoken,' he adds, 'not of what is to happen at the end of the world, but of what was to happen at the end or destruction of the Jewish state.' In a note to Matt. xiii. 41, he says, 'I have explained this and the foregoing verse, as relating not to the end of the world; but to that of the Jewish state, which was to be destroyed within forty years after Jesus' death; for the same manner of expression is made use of, when it is more certain, that not the time of the general judgment, but that of the visitation of the Jews is meant, viz. in Matt. xvi. 27, 28, where it is said, *The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall*

7. ‘The reapers are *the angels*.’ What did Jesus intend by *the angels*? Familiar traditions have confined the application of this word almost exclusively to superhuman beings; but the attentive reader of the Bible needs not to be informed that the term *angel* is synonymous with *messenger*, and that it is applied not only to mankind, but even to inanimate objects. Jesus always represented himself, when coming to destroy the Jewish state, as being attended *by angels*. ‘For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, *with his angels*; * * * verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’ (Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38, and ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27.) Here the coming of Christ, with his *angels*, is confined to that generation. On another occasion Jesus said, ‘they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he shall send his *angels* with a great sound of a trumpet;’ to which he immediately adds, ‘this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.’ (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, 34. See also Matt. xxv. 31, and 2 Thess. i. 7.) It is a circumstance which confirms our application of the parable, that the Son of man sends forth *his angels* to destroy his enemies, for this language is invariably applied, in the New Testament, to the destruction of Jerusalem, whenever that event is described. In the parable before us, the *angels*, or messengers, were to be the agents of destruction to the enemies of Christ; and by comparing this fact with what is stated Matt. xxii. 7, we ascertain who the messen-

reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’ This last verse, accomplished in one of the apostles at least, (I mean John) plainly shows, that all the phrases used in the first verse were designed to express only the destruction that was to befall the Jewish state: at which time the Christians, who *endured to the end*, were to be saved, (Matt. x. 22, and xxiv. 13.) These are also called *the elect* in Matt. xxiv. 22, 24. And Ecclesiastical history informs us, that by a divine admonition, the faithful Christians retired from Judea before the ruin of it by the Romans, and were preserved. (See Matt. iii. 12; xxiv. 22. Luke xxi. 18, 36.)

gers of destruction were. ‘But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth ; and he sent forth *his armies*, and *destroyed those murderers*, and burned up their city.’ Here it is certainly meant that the Roman armies were the messengers which God sent to destroy his rebellious people, the Jews.

8. We come now to consider another important question, viz. what did Jesus signify by the ‘furnace of fire,’ into which the wicked were cast by the angels of destruction, to whom God had given them up ? We know it has been the usual opinion, that this furnace of fire is a place of torment in the future world. But are there any who have yet to learn, that this figure was employed by the sacred writers to represent *temporal* destruction ? The bondage Israel suffered under Pharaoh was described as a *furnace*. ‘But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the *iron furnace*, even out of Egypt.’ (Deut. iv. 20. See also 1 Kings viii. 51 ; Isa. xlvi. 10 ; Jer. xi. 4.) So the tremendous calamities, the ‘great tribulation’ suffered by the Jews at the destruction of their favorite city—compared with which the afflictions suffered in Egypt were less than nothing—are represented by a ‘furnace of fire ;’ and the application of the figure to the city of Jerusalem is made so directly and indisputably, that the most obtuse sense must perceive it. ‘The Lord’s fire is in Zion, and his FURNACE in Jerusalem.’ (Isa. xxxi. 9.) A passage still more full, and more pointed, remains to be quoted. ‘And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross : all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the *furnace* ; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the *fire* of my wrath, and ye shall be melted

in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof ; and ye shall know that I the Lord *have poured out my fury upon you.*' (Ezek. xxii. 17—22.) There cannot remain a lingering doubt that the 'furnace of fire' was the city of Jerusalem, into which God gathered the Jewish nation, and there he melted them in the fire of his wrath.

9. After the destruction of the wicked, the righteous were to shine as the sun *in the kingdom* of their Father—who were these ? The answer is obvious—such as were *in the kingdom*—such as had set down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, while others were cast out ; of whom it is said in the book of Daniel, that they 'shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they shall turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.' (xii. 3.) Their persecutors the Jews being destroyed, and persecutions on every hand being abated and softened, they would experience comparative earthly felicity, and have an enlarged enjoyment of gospel peace and life. Separated from hypocrites, the church would be purer—she would attract, by the whiteness of her robes, the admiration of heathen spectators, and constrain them to cry, 'Behold, how these Christians love one another.' She would shine as the sun, the more brilliantly, because the clouds of oppression and affliction had just been dispelled. 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.'

PARABLE OF THE GROWTH OF GRAIN.

Mark iv. 26—29.

'And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground: And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.'—
Mark iv. 26—29.

WRITERS differ in regard to the true interpretation of this parable. One class suppose, that the man who cast seed into the ground was Jesus Christ, who would not return to gather the fruit until the harvest. They understand the harvest in this case to be the event which is described under the same figure in the parable of the tares. It seems improper, however, to say of the Saviour, he 'should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, *he knoweth not how*.'

Dr. Whitby gives the following note: 'This parable is mentioned only by St. Mark, and it seems to me to relate to the good ground; for that only brought forth ripe fruit, or fruit unto perfection. I, therefore, paraphrase it thus; "What I said of the seed sown upon good ground, may be illustrated by this parable, that the doctrine of the kingdom of God, received into a good and honest heart, is like seed sown by a man in his ground, manured and tilled, and so prepared to receive it; for when he hath sown it, he sleeps and wakes, day after day; and looking on it, he sees it spring and grow up through the virtue of the earth in which it is sown, though he knows not how it doth so; and when he finds it ripe, he reaps it, and so receives the benefit of the seed sown. So is it here; the seed sown in the good and honest heart, brings forth fruit with patience, and this fruit daily increas-

eth, though we know not how the word and Spirit worketh that increase; and then Christ, the husbandman, who sows this seed, at the time of the harvest, sends forth the angels, his reapers, and gathers this good seed, i. e. the sons of the kingdom represented by it, into his celestial mansions."'* Adam Clarke has copied this note.

I am inclined to the opinion after all, that these writers have not hit the true design and intent of the parable; for it strikes me it was the object of Christ to illustrate, by the *imperceptible* growth of grain, the gradual and imperceptible growth of the word of the kingdom in the heart. A man after having cast seed into the earth, cannot see the growth, because it is very gradual. He may rise by night or by day, to observe it, but *he knoweth not how* it is done. The process is carried on by the influence of the earth upon the plant; and the plant doth not come to maturity all at once, but there is 'first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.' But when the fruit is ripe, the husbandman knows what to do: he puts in his sickle, and reaps it. Thus it is with the progress of truth in the soul. A man cannot be made perfect in knowledge in a moment. The growth of truth in the heart is gradual; it can scarcely be perceived, and no man can expect to come at once to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ. The apostles prayed, 'Lord, *increase* our faith,' (Luke xvii. 5.) 'Increase the fruits of your righteousness.' (2 Cor. ix. 10.) 'Being fruitful in every good work, and *increasing* in the knowledge of God.' (Col. i. 10.) 'We beseech you, brethren, that ye *increase* more and more.' (1 Thess. iv. 10.) So (Eph. iv. 10,) the Christians were required to '*grow* up into Christ in all things.' 'Your faith *groweth* exceedingly.' (2 Thess. i. 3.) '*Grow* in grace,' saith Peter, 'and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' (2 Peter iii. 18.)

Horne takes the same view of this parable. 'With what singular beauty and propriety is the gradual progress

* Comment on the Par.

of religion in the soul, from the beginning to its maturity, represented by seed committed to a generous soil, which, after a few successions of day and night, *imperceptibly* vegetates—peeps above the surface—springs higher and higher—and spontaneously producing, first, the verdant blade, then the ear, afterwards the swelling grain, gradually filling the ear; and, when the time of harvest is come, and it is arrived at its maturity, it is then reaped and collected into the store-house.'*

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

Matt. xiii. 31, 32. Mark iv. 31, 32. Luke xiii. 18, 19.

'Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air, come and lodge in the branches thereof.'—Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

THERE is an apparent discrepancy between the account given in this place by our Lord and the character of the mustard plant, since, among us, the mustard never attains the size here described. In order to account for this, some writers have supposed that, in the more favorable climate of the East, its dimensions and strength would far exceed what they ever arrive at in colder countries. In support of these conjectures Dr. Adam Clarke remarks, 'Some soils, being more luxuriant than others, and the climate much warmer, raise the same plant to a size and perfection, far beyond what a poorer soil, or a colder climate can possibly do.' Herodotus says, he has seen wheat and barley, in the country of Babylon, which carried

* Intro iii. 449.

a blade full four fingers, breadth, and that the millet and sesamum grew to an incredible size. The Dr. states, that he had himself seen a field of common cabbages, in one of the Norman isles, each of which was from seven to nine feet in height, and one in the garden of a friend which grew beside an apple-tree, though the latitude of the place was only about 48 deg. 18 min. N. was *fifteen* feet high. These facts, and several others which might be adduced, fully confirm, Dr. Clarke thinks, the possibility of what our Lord says of the mustard tree, however incredible such a thing may appear to those who are acquainted only with the productions of the northern regions and cold climates.* To this it is replied, that although there is a great difference found to obtain among plants of the same species, in different climates and soils, yet it is not to be supposed that they would change their distinctive character, so far as to convert an herbaceous plant into a tree. On this account, Mr. Frost has contended that the *σιβαρι* spoken of by the Saviour does not signify what is generally termed *mustard*, but a species of the *phytolacca*. He sums up the evidences for his supposition as follows: ‘Because the *phytolacca dodecandra* is one of the largest trees indigenous to the country where the obervation was made; because it has the smallest seed of any tree in that country; because it is both used as a culinary vegetable and medicinal stimulant, which common mustard is also; because a species of the same genus is well known in the United States by the term wild mustard; because the ultimate chemical elements of the seed *sinapis nigra* and *phytolacca dodecandra* are the same.’ It is thought by good authors, that the statements of Mr. Frost, in regard to the latter plant, are not well authenticated.† Dr. Campbell remarks, and after him Parkhurst, that the assertion of Christ, *the smallest of all seeds*, is to be understood ‘of all those seeds with which the people of Judea were then acquainted. Our Lord’s words are to be interpreted by popular use. And we learn, from Matt. xvii. 20, that

* See his Com. on the place. † Calmet’s Dic. Art. Mustard.

like a grain of mustard seed, was become proverbial for expressing a very small quantity. That there was a species of the *sinapi*, or at least what the Orientals comprehended under that name, which rose to the size of a tree, appears from some quotations brought by Lightfoot and Buxtorf, from the writings of the Rabbies, men who will not be suspected of partiality, when their testimony happens to favor the writers of the New Testament.*

Having given the reader the views which have been expressed on this subject by the above-named authors, we would add only this remark of our own, that if the Jews, in the time of Christ, acknowledged the great growth of the mustard-plant, it was of itself a sufficient reason why he might refer to it in the terms used in the parable.

'The Jews,' saith Whitby, 'give a wonderful account of the growth and increase of the mustard-seed, viz. there was a stalk of mustard-seed in Sichin, from which sprang out three boughs, of which one was broke off, and covered the tent of a potter, and produced three cabs of mustard; R. Simeon B. Calipha said, a stalk of mustard-seed was in my field, into which I was wont to climb, as men do into a fig-tree. Buxtorf *in voce Chardal.*' †

* Campbell's Four Gos. note on the place. Parkhurst's Greek and Eng. Lex. under the word *σινάπι*. See also Hammond's note on Luke xiii. 19.

† Com. on Matt. xiii. 31. See also Lightfoot, xi. 206. The following passage is worthy of being introduced here: 'In order that we may enter fully into the meaning of this parable of our Lord, it may not be irrelevant to observe, that in eastern countries, the mustard-plant (or at least a species of the *sinapi*, which the orientals comprehended under that name) attains a greater size than with us. It appears that the orientals were accustomed to give the denomination of *trees*, to plants growing to the height of ten or twelve feet, and having branches in proportion. To such a height the mustard-plant grows in Judea; and its branches are so strong, and well covered with leaves, as to afford shelter to the feathered tribe. Such is the image by which Jesus Christ represents the progress of his gospel. The kingdom of heaven, said he, is like to a grain of mustard-seed—small and contemptible in its beginning; which is indeed the least of all seeds, that is, of all those seeds with which the Jews were then acquainted: (for our Lord's words are to be interpreted by popular use; and we learn from Matt. xvii. 20, that, *like a grain of mustard-seed*, was a proverbial

By the kingdom of heaven in this parable, Jesus intended his spiritual dispensation, or moral reign, which he came to establish among men. It was like a grain of mustard-seed, because, at its commencement, it may be said to have been exceedingly small. It contained, however, the principle of growth in itself, and was destined to flourish wonderfully, without the aid of human power. Like the stone cut out of the mountain *without hands*, which became a great mountain and filled the *whole earth*, so this would spread abroad its branches far and wide. The prophet Ezekiel uses a similar figure. ‘Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it.’ (xvii. 22—24.) It was common among the Jews to represent any thing which flourished greatly, under the figure of a tree. Nebuchadnezzar’s vast kingdom was shown to him, in a vision, under the like figure; and the Psalmist said of the righteous man, that ‘he should be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.’ (Psal. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8.) The rest and peace which men would enjoy under the influence of the gospel, is shown by the ‘birds of the air lodging in the branches;’ or, to use the more comprehensive expression of Ezekiel, ‘under it shall dwell *all* fowl of *every* wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.’

expression to denote a small quantity,) but when it is grown, it cometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Under this simple and beautiful figure does Jesus Christ describe the admirable development of his gospel from its origin to its final consummation.’ Horne’s Intro ii. 616.

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

Matt. xiii. 33. Luke xiii. 21.

‘Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.’—Matt. xiii. 33.

THAT leaven is put for doctrine, See Matt. xvi. 6, 12. The object of this parable is precisely that of the one last noticed—to show, as Kenrick observes, that although the religion of Christ was small and insignificant in the beginning, it would be diffused throughout the world. ‘The gospel hath such a secret invisible influence on the hearts of men, to change and affect them, and all the actions that flow from them, that it is fitly resembled to leaven, so mixt thoroughly with the whole, that although it appeareth not in any part of it visibly, yet every part, hath a tincture from it.’*

We are enabled, by the help of this parable, to illustrate a truth, to which we have already referred, viz. that it is the nature of the gospel of Jesus Christ to conform every thing to itself. As leaven operates on meal, and assimilates it to its own nature, so the gospel operates on the hearts of men, and transforms them into a moral likeness to itself. It is for this reason, that it is important, above all things, to preach the truth, in its purity, to mankind. The doctrine of divine love will make men *lovely*—the doctrine of divine mercy will make them *merciful*—the doctrine of divine grace will make them *gracious*—the doctrine of divine benevolence will make them *beneficent*—the doctrine of divine kindness to sinners will make them *kind to sinners*—the doctrine of divine impartiality will make them *impartial*. Contrary doctrines must, and will, have contrary

* Hammond, in Paraphrase and Annotations.

effects. The doctrine of vengeance will make them *vengeful*—the doctrine of cruelty will make them *cruel*—the doctrine of hatred will fill them with its spirit, and the doctrine of partiality will make them *partial*. Wherever these doctrines have any effect, they have such an effect, as every one must know who has examined their influences upon the world. What doctrine have all the persecutors believed that ever lived in the world? What doctrine has the *holy* catholic church believed—she who has been drunk with the blood of saints, and to whom the groans of burning martyrs have been most delightful music? The history of that church is a history of usurped power, of blood, and fire and oppression. Had her priests believed in the doctrine of divine love for all mankind, is it not reasonable to suppose that the influence of that doctrine on their hearts, like the operation of leaven on meal, would have softened and subdued their angry passions, and awakened the spirit of compassion and love? The persecutions of Protestants, one against another, have been generated by the influence of the same unwholesome doctrines. When Christianity pervades the whole earth, men will learn, like their Master, to ‘have compassion on the ignorant, and those who are out of the way,’ (Heb. v. 2,) they will ‘not hurt nor destroy in all God’s holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’ (Isa. xi. 9.)

Another fact confirmed by the parable under consideration, is this, that *all mankind* shall at last know God, and feel the power of his truth. ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till *the whole* was leavened.’ ‘The reason why three measures of meal are mentioned, is that this was the quantity of meal used at a time for making bread.* The apostle says, ‘a little leaven leaveneth *the whole lump*.’ (1 Cor. v. 6; Gal. v. 9.) Did not Jesus, in the parable, mean to intimate, that the triumphs of his gospel shall be universal? The same great and glorious

* Kenrick’s Exposition.

truth is taught in several passages of scripture. ‘All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.’ (Psalm xxii. 27.) ‘All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.’ (lxxxvi. 9.) ‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ (John xii. 32.) ‘In thee shall *all nations* be blessed.’ (Gal. iii. 8.) ‘That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one *all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.’ (Eph. i. 10.) ‘At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) The passages to this point are too numerous to be all quoted in this place.

PARABLE OF THE TREASURE.

Matt. xiii. 44.

‘Again. The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.’

By the kingdom of heaven, in this passage, we are to understand *the gospel* of Jesus Christ, which he had previously likened to ‘a grain of mustard-seed,’ and to ‘leaven.’ This kingdom was represented by a treasure hidden in a field, which, when a man had found, he concealed, or did not make known that he had found it, and for joy went and sold all he had, and bought that field.

The object of this parable appears to have been, to set forth the great value of the gospel, and the wisdom of parting with all earthly treasures, for the sake of obtaining

it. The man who purchased the field, is represented as surrendering all he had to obtain it; by which Jesus impressed on his disciples the important fact, that the love of glory, of riches, and of pleasure, must be renounced, when brought in competition with the religion he bestowed upon the world. The character which our Lord here draws for the imitation of his followers, is put, by way of opposition, to that of the man mentioned in ver. 22, in whom ‘the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word, and he became unfruitful.’

When Jesus was on earth, the greatest personal sacrifices were necessary in those who would be faithful to him. Such was the opposition he had to meet, and such the bitterness of his enemies, that any man who should profess his name, might reasonably expect to be called on to give up all that the world would call dear. Of this he fairly gave mankind warning. He did not entice them to become his disciples through the hope of earthly gain, and aggrandizement, but forewarned them that they must *forsake all*, and follow him. In doing this, they would no. really be losers—they would exchange the paltry toys of earth, for heavenly and substantial good. The gospel is the greatest of all riches. It is the *riches* of God’s grace, (Eph. i. 7,) the ‘exceeding *riches* of his grace,’ (ii. 7,) ‘the unsearchable *riches* of Christ,’ (iii. 8,) and hence the reproach of Christ is said to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. (Heb. xi. 26.) In him, it is said, ‘are hid all the *treasures* of wisdom and knowledge.’ (Col. ii. 3.) These were the treasures of the kingdom of heaven; and when people obtained these, they were said to lay up ‘treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.’ (Matt. vi. 20.) The propriety of parting with all things to obtain these treasures, Jesus proposed on a certain occasion to the young man, of whom we read in Matt. xix. 21. ‘Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.’ Because it required a willingness in men to part with all earthly possessions for the kingdom of God’s sake, it was

hard for a rich man to enter that kingdom. (Ver. 23.) The apostles forsook all, and followed Christ; and he assured them, that every one who had forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for his name's sake, should be abundantly the gainer thereby,—he should receive an hundred fold,—he should enjoy that everlasting life, which the knowledge of the true God imparts to the mind. (Compare Matt. xix. 29, with John xvii. 3.)

PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

‘Again, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.’

WE are informed, that the finest pearls are fished up in the Persian Gulf, and on the coast of Bahrein, so called from the city of that name, on the borders of Arabia; and Idumea and Palestine, being not far distant, it is not to be wondered at that *pearls* were well known to Job and the Hebrews.

The design of this parable is the same with that of the last, viz. to show that the gospel is the greatest of all treasures, and that it was wise in the followers of Christ to surrender all things to obtain it, as the merchant sold all that he had, and purchased the pearl of great price. In the use of this comparison, Jesus alludes to a well-known maxim among the Jews, that true knowledge was better than silver, or gold, or precious stones. ‘Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the

merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared with her.' (Prov. iii. 13—15.)

As the observations under the preceding parable, apply with equal force to this, we shall pass to the consideration of another subject, without any further remarks.

PARABLE OF THE NET.

Matt. xiii. 47—50.

'Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just: And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

THE subject intended to be illustrated in the parable before us, is the same which formed the basis of the parable of the tares of the field. The net gathered of every kind, good and bad; and the field contained both tares and wheat. The good were gathered into vessels, but the bad were cast away; and in the harvest, the tares were rooted up from among the wheat. The application of the two parables is precisely the same. They were both to be fulfilled (*εν τη συρτελεια το αιωνος*) in the end of *the age*. (Compare vers. 40 and 49.) The angels, or messengers, were to separate between the good and bad in both cases; and in both it is said, of the enemies of Christ, that they should be cast 'into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' In the full explanation, therefore, which we have given of the parable of the Tares, we may be said to have explained at length

that of the Net. It cannot be necessary that we go over again with the arguments and illustrations we have already advanced ; the two parables are so plainly referable to the same subject, that if the reader will peruse what we have said on the former, he will be fully able to understand the latter.

It is worthy of remark, in this place, that our Lord was in the habit of drawing his images from present objects and circumstances. When he uttered the parable of the Net, he was in a *ship*, upon the *sea* of Galilee, addressing a multitude who stood upon the shore ; and this lake abounded with fish, a circumstance that evinces the propriety of the parable being uttered on that occasion, and shows the events that called it up to the Saviour's mind. Several writers have treated on this trait in his discourses, but none perhaps with greater effect than Archbishop Newcome, who has collected the various instances in which our Lord's instructions were suggested by accidental objects, and arose in an easy and natural manner from present or recent occasions and circumstances. He brings the section to a close in which he has recorded various instances of this kind, with language like the following : 'By so strongly marking our Lord's peculiar mode of instructing, and, instead of repeating general lessons on religious and moral topics, introducing so many references to time and place, to occasional occurrences and present objects, the evangelists furnish a presumption that his discourses are not artfully and cautiously invented by them, but are always the substance of what he said, and often his very expressions. And as our Lord's conversations so constantly took this turn, it may be collected that his grand purpose was to be useful and instructive. His excellent lessons were likely to be better retained this way ; as every object and event to which he had alluded, served for a monitor and remembrancer. It may be added, that this manner of teaching must sometimes have given a peculiar animation to his discourses : that a proud display of knowledge and wisdom is best avoided by pursuing this method : that it proves how full our Lord's mind was of

the best thoughts, his mouth speaking out of the abundance of his heart ; and that it may teach good men distantly to copy his admirable manner, by making a right use of common incidents on fit occasions.' *

PARABLE OF THE OLD GARMENT, &c.

Matt. ix. 16, 17. Mark ii. 21, 22. Luke v. 36, 37.

' No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles : else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish : but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.'—Matt. ix. 16, 17.

THIS language is almost unintelligible to common English readers. Why is not *new* wine as safe in *old* bottles as in *new*? Are not old bottles as capable of resisting the fermentation of the liquor? The confusion, in this case, arises from not distinguishing between the kind of bottles used among us, and those which were used among the Jews, and which are used at the East, and in some parts of Europe, even unto the present day. Bottles with us are principally made of glass, and an old one is as strong, and equally as safe a depository for any kind of liquor, as a new. With the ancient Jews, however, it was not so. Their bottles were made of *skins*, and an old one, therefore, would necessarily be much weaker than a new. It was, of course, hazardous to put *new* wine into old bottles. The wine would ferment and swell, the vessel would be distended; and if not of sufficient strength, the skin would be ruptured, and the liquor lost. New wine was, therefore, put into new bottles, which were strong enough to bear the distension; and the old

* Newcome's Observations.

bottles were reserved for old wine, which was not subject to fermentation. This fact being borne in mind, the parable before us will be the better understood.

Dr. Campbell translates the phrase in the parable, ‘old leathern bottles ;’ and adds, in a note, ‘Such vessels were commonly then, and in some countries are still, of leather, which were not easily distended when old, and were consequently more ready to burst by the fermentation of the liquor.’* ‘The modern Arabs, as the Jewish people anciently did, keep their water, milk, wine and other liquors, in bottles made of skins. These bottles, when old, are frequently rent, but are capable of being repaired, by being bound up, or pieced in various ways. Of this description were the *wine bottles of the Gibeonites, old and rent, and bound up.* (Josh. ix. 4.) As new wine was liable to ferment, and consequently would burst the old skins, all prudent persons would put it into new skins. Bottles of skin, it is well known, are still in use in Spain, where they are called *Borrachas.*’†

* Four Gospels, in the place.

† Horne’s Intro. iii. 389. The nations of the East use such vessels to contain their liquors at the present day. That celebrated traveller, Mr. Bruce, remarks, ‘A *girba* is an ox’s skin, squared, and the edges sewed together very artificially, by a double seam, which does not let out water, much resembling that upon the best English cricket balls. An opening is left at the top of the *girba*, in the same manner as the bung hole of a cask. Around this the skin is gathered to the size of a large handful, which, when the *girba* is full of water, is tied round with a whip-cord. These *girbas* generally contain about sixty gallons each, and two of them are the load of a camel. They are then all besmeared on the outside with grease, as well to hinder the water from oozing, as to prevent its being evaporated by the heat of the sun upon the *girba*, which, in fact, happened to us twice, so as to put us in imminent danger of perishing with thirst.’—Travels, vol. iv. p. 334. Again: ‘There was great plenty of shell-fish to be picked up on every shoal. I had loaded the vessel with four *skins* of fresh water, equal to four hogsheads, with cords of buoys fixed to the end of each of them; so that if we had been shipwrecked near land, as rubbing two sticks together made us a fire, I was not afraid but that we should receive succors, before we were driven to the last extremity, provided we did not perish in the sea.’—Vol. i. p. 205.

Niebuhr, a contemporary traveller of more credit, gives the following account of his baggage when setting out from Cairo for Suez. ‘We had each of us a vessel of thick leather to drink out of; and because we should find no water for some days, we took also quite a number of

The better to understand the design of the Saviour in this parable, it will be necessary to notice the occasion which called it forth. By referring to the 14th verse, we perceive that the disciples of John came to Jesus with this question : ‘ Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not ? ’ In reply, he said, ‘ Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them ? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.’ As though he had said, Fasting is a sign of sorrow. The children of the bride-chamber are not sorrowful while

goat-skins filled with water, with us. Our wine we had in large glass bottles, which seemed to us to be the best for this purpose ; but when a camel happens to fall, or strikes with his load against another one, these vessels easily break ; and therefore it is better, in oriental journeys, to carry both wine and spirits in *goat-skins*. The skins that are thus used to transport water, have the hair outwards ; those that are intended for wine, have the hair inwards, and are so well covered with pitch, that the drink acquires no bad taste whatever. And although, for an European, it may be at first somewhat disgusting to keep his drink in such vessels, yet he has not to fear that his wine will be spilled and lost by the way, as was the case with a part of ours.’ Mr. King, a late missionary, remarks, that when departing from Caire for Jerusalem, they ‘ purchased four *goat-skins*, and four *leather-bottles* to carry water.’—Missionary Herald, for 1824, p. 34. Tyerman and Bennett, in their Journal of recent travels in the East, give us the following paragraph : ‘ The milkmen who have to cross the Ganges to milk their cows, or to sell their commodity, are equally regardless of these formidable looking reptiles, [alligators.] The vessel which they use is a large bottle made of thick leather, which, when empty, or rather when filled with air, is very buoyant. This being fastened to a piece of light wood, makes a powerful float, on which the man rests, and easily ferries it over the river by the action of his hands and feet. On the contrary, when the bottle is full of milk, though it sinks deeper in the water, yet, the contents being specifically lighter, his raft, including the attachment of timber or bamboo, is sufficient to bear him through the current, paddled, as before, by his hands and feet.’—American ed. vol. iii. 107. Every one has read of the dreadful horror which took place at the *black hole* in Calcutta, when 123 persons were suffocated in one night. The following passage relates to that event : ‘ Unfortunately, the stations at, or near the windows being decidedly the best, the most dreadful struggles were made to reach them. Loud cries being raised of ‘ water,’ the humane jemautdar pushed through the bars several *skins* filled with that liquid ; but this produced only an increase of calamity, through the violent efforts made in order to obtain it.’—Hist. of India, by Hugh Murray and others, New York, 1832, vol. ii. p. 19.

the bridegroom is with them ; so neither are my disciples sorrowful while I remain ; but the time will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them—when I shall be cut off,—and then, being sorrowful, they will fast ; not, however, from a sense of duty, but because those who are sorrowful naturally refuse food. Fasting you regard as a duty under the law of Moses ; but, in my kingdom, duty is of a higher nature, and consists in love. This is the difference between the two dispensations ; the one places importance on rites and ceremonies, the other makes all duty to consist in love to God and man. Now ‘no man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment ; for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles ; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish ; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.’ As though the Saviour had continued, You wish to unite the two dispensations, and compel my disciples to observe what you regard as the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. It never was designed that these two dispensations should be united. The gospel was not sent as a *patch* for the law, but to make an end of it, and remove it entirely. Neither can they be united ; they are so contrary in their natures, that the new would destroy the old. As a piece of new cloth sewed to an old garment makes the rent worse, and as new wine will cause old bottles to break and perish, so would your religion be destroyed, if mine were incorporated with it. Adam Clarke takes the same view of the design of this parable. ‘The institutes of Christ, and those of the Pharisees, could never be brought to accord : an attempt to combine the two systems, would be as absurd as it would be destructive. The old covenant made way for the new, which was its completion and its end ; but with that old covenant the new cannot be incorporated.’* The authors of the Assembly’s Annotations were of the same opinion. ‘Jesus useth this man-

* Commentary on the passage.

ner of similitude, that he might show that he separated *Evangelii novitatem a legis vetustate, sicut fructus separatur a semine*, i. e. the newness of the gospel from the oldness of the law, as the fruit is separated from the seed. Tertul. adv. Marcion.*

The Scribes and Pharisees on a certain occasion found fault with Jesus, because his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders, in neglecting to wash their hands when they eat bread. (Matt. xv. 1, 2.) And so strong was the disposition to mingle the institutes of Moses and the Pharisees with those of Christ, that on one occasion, at Antioch, it excited ‘no small dissension and disputation.’ Certain men, who had come down from Judea, taught the Christians, that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. It became necessary to send a deputation, consisting of Paul, Barnabas, and others, up to Jerusalem, to settle the matter; and it was decided that circumcision was not binding upon the disciples of Christ. (Acts xv.)

The doctrine of Christ was very fitly represented by *new wine*,—the same figure which the prophet Isaiah uses, (lv. 1.) The effect of mingling the doctrine and precepts of Christ with the institutions of the Pharisees, would be to destroy those institutions, as the bottles were destroyed by being made the repositories of new wine.

One of the traditions of the Pharisees was, that men should wash their hands when they eat bread, (Matt. xv. 1, 2,) and this, not for purposes of cleanliness, but *as a religious duty*, to render them acceptable to God. On the other hand, Christ laid no stress on mere ceremonies, but made human duty to consist only in works of piety and benevolence. Now these precepts could not be blended; and to allow authority to the precepts of Christ, was to render the others of none effect. ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’—this was an ancient tradition, entirely incompatible with the precept of Christ; ‘resist not evil.’ (Matt. v. 38, 39.) Again, it was an ancient

* Assembly's Annot. on the place.

tradition, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.’ The command of Christ was directly opposed thereto. ‘I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.’ (Matt. v. 44.) Such contradictory laws could not both have influence on the mind; and to set up one, was to overthrow the other. To use the words of the figure, the *new wine* of the gospel would burst the *old bottles* of pharisaic tradition.

In the present age of the world, we frequently perceive an unwise mixing of truth and error, fact and falsehood; but this always takes place to the disadvantage of error, not of truth. Error, if it stand at all, must stand alone; it can receive no support from truth. Those who believe the doctrine of endless misery, do well to maintain also the doctrine of reprobation to eternal death, by the absolute decree of God, and to say that God reprobated the non-elect because he hated them, and that he made them to hate them and render them miserable, and for no other purpose. This system would indeed be awful, but it would have the merit of being consistent with itself. Its repugnance to the benevolence of the human heart, has led many to endeavor to incorporate with it the mild doctrine of Jesus. Hence it is declared, that although God will punish some men without mercy and without end, he loves them *all*, and wills the salvation of *all*, and sent his beloved Son to die for *all*. This is putting the *new wine* into the *old bottles*; and the result inevitably will be, that the *old bottles* will perish; as Paul says of the doctrines of men, ‘which all are to *perish* with the using.’ (Col. ii. 22.) Every person in the exercise of common sense will unquestionably conclude, that if God loves all men, and desires their salvation, and sent his Son to die for all, there is no danger that he will punish any unmercifully and endlessly; and thus the very attempt to *patch* the old doctrine of endless misery, will bring it into disrepute, and at last cause it to be very generally rejected.

PARABLE OF THE DEBTORS.

Luke vii. 41, 42.

'There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.'

We have, in this parable, an instance of the facility with which our Saviour would throw together, at the moment, a train of circumstances in the form of a fable, for the purpose of producing in his proud and watchful opponents the strongest feelings of self-condemnation. To understand the parable, and the object of Jesus in uttering it, we shall find it necessary to take into consideration the principal events that are narrated in the context.

In verse 36 it is said, 'And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.' Here it should be remarked, first, that the Pharisees were that class of people, who, above all others, most bitterly opposed the Son of God. This Pharisee does not seem to have had any good object in inviting Jesus to his house. He certainly neglected the usual offices of respect in receiving a stranger; and the probability is, that the invitation was given, in the hope that Jesus, during the visit, would say or do something, that the Pharisee might turn to his disadvantage.

The Jews, and indeed all the Eastern nations, have been remarkable for their hospitality. They were so accustomed to spend much time in saluting strangers, that Jesus on one occasion, when he charged his disciples with an errand that required all their time, bade them salute no man by the way.' (Luke x. 4.) When they went into a house, they were to say, 'Peace be to this house.' (Luke x. 5.) Peter, in enjoining the duties of life upon his brethren,

fails not to charge them to ‘be courteous.’ (1 Peter iii. 8.) See the account of Abraham’s reception of strangers, (Gen. xviii. 1—8) where we are informed he besought them to enter his tent, and said, ‘Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts.’ (See also Gen. xlivi. 24; 1 Sam xxv. 41.) Paul enumerates among the usual duties, lodging strangers, and washing their feet. (1 Tim. v. 10.) ‘When strangers reached their lodgings for the night, it was usual for the master of the house to give them water to wash their feet. Thus Sir John Chardin tells us “that the sweat and dust which penetrate all kinds of covering for the feet, produce a filth there which excites a very troublesome itching; and though the Eastern people are extremely careful to preserve the body clean, it is more for refreshment than cleanliness that they wash their feet at the end of a journey.”’* It is highly reasonable, however, that motives of cleanliness operated in no small degree to produce these frequent washings of the feet. The Jews wore no stockings, and in the place of shoes, they had sandals, which were merely soles of hide, leather, or wood, fixed to the feet by straps. These were put off on entering a house: hence the phrase to *loose one’s shoes or sandals from off one’s feet*. For these reasons it became necessary to wash the feet after travelling; and more especially in those cases where the guests were invited to a meal, (as was Jesus in the instance already narrated); for as the Jews did not sit to partake of their meals, but reclined on beds or couches, the dust upon their feet and legs would be very offensive.† Dr. Hammond says, ‘that it was the fashion of those countries in their entertainments, to wash their guests’ feet before meals, is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. And the same was a custom also among the Grecians in their more splendid extraordinary feasts. They used baths of wine and water.’‡

* Brown’s Antiq. of Jews, ii. 228.

† See Calmet’s Dic. Art. Sandals.

‡ Com. on Luke vii. 44.

To anoint the head with oil, sometimes highly perfumed, was common among the Jews; and it was a usual courtesy to strangers to furnish them with oil, and to anoint their heads. Jahn says, ‘The guests were anointed with precious oil, Psal. xxiii. 5; xlvi. 7; Amos vi. 6; Eccles. ix. 8; Luke vii. 37, 38. Anciently, (and the same is the custom now in Asia) the persons invited, before their departure, were perfumed, especially upon the beard, as we may gather from Exod. xxx. 37, 38.’* Harmer remarks of the Arabs, ‘They make use of odoriferous oils. So Hasselquist tells us, that the Egyptians put the flowers of the tuberose into oil, and by this means give the oil a most excellent smell, scarcely inferior to the oil of jasmine. In another page he mentions their laying flowers of jasmine, narcissus, &c. in oil, and so making an odoriferous ointment, which those that love perfumes, apply to the head, nose and beard.’† This practice of anointing is referred to Deut. xxviii. 40. Brown refers to the same custom. ‘The anointing of the hair of the head and beard with oil, and trimming and combing them, makes an essential part of their daily dress, whilst neglecting them is considered as expressive of sorrow. The use of oil, as an article of dress, was as ancient as the days of Moses.’‡ This leads us to see the force of the Saviour’s injunction to his disciples, viz. ‘When thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast,’ &c. (Matt. vi. 16.) A person unacquainted with Jewish customs would see no sense in these words; he would conclude at once, that to anoint the head was the most direct way to attract attention. But, when it is remembered that it was the custom of the Jews to anoint the head, it will be seen that a person made himself singular by omitting it; and hypocrites omitted it in their fastings, that they might be distinguished from others, and thus ‘appear unto men to fast.’ Thus, Bulkley has remarked, ‘the anointing of the head was a customary thing among the

* Arch. Sec. 148.

† Observa. xxxii.

‡ Antiq. of Jews, ii. p. 174.

Jews; as appears evidently by the directions given by our blessed Saviour himself, concerning fasting: "When thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face," i. e. do not affect any demure or formal airs, any peculiar outward tokens of contrition and self-abasement, with a view of attracting the notice of others, or of being thought an uncommonly devout and humble penitent; but appear after the customary and usual manner, that thou seem not unto men to fast.* That it was a sign of sorrow to omit the anointing of the body, see Dan. x. 3. We have been thus particular to show the ancient Eastern customs, in these respects, that the marked neglect of Simon to the Saviour may be apparent, and that the Saviour's gentle admonition to him may be the better understood.†

We have shown that Simon, one of the Pharisees, and, of course, one of the enemies of Jesus, had invited him to his house, not with kind intentions, but probably to entrap him, or to draw something from him that he might turn to his disadvantage. In receiving him he had neglected the customary civilities; and his conduct, contrasted with the well-known hospitality of his nation, could not but have been designed as marked contempt. In this stage of the events, the historian proceeds to say, (vers. 37 and 38) that 'a woman, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him,

* Bulkley on the Parables.

t Since the above was written, I have fallen upon the following paragraph: 'I confess,' says Captain Wilson, 'that since my return from India, I have been forcibly struck with several things, which prove the Scriptures to be an Eastern book. For instance, the language of one of the Psalms, where David says, "thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over," (Psalms xxiii. 5,) most likely alludes to a certain custom which continues to this day. I once had this ceremony performed on myself, in the house of a rich Indian, in the presence of a large company. The gentleman of the house poured upon my hands and arms a delightfully odorous perfume, put a golden cup into my hand, and poured wine into it till it ran over, assuring me, at the same time, that it was a great pleasure to him to receive me, and that I should find a rich supply in his house. I think the inspired poet expressed his sense of the divine goodness by this allusion.'

weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.' This woman is said to be *a sinner*. The expression is used emphatically: Dr. Lightfoot thinks she was an adulteress, and concludes she was Mary Magdalen, though some dispute the latter point. She was certainly regarded with great abhorrence. Why should such a woman wish to see Jesus? What had given her the desire to appear before him? I never can reflect upon this narration, without asking myself the questions now proposed; for, evidently, she went into the house of Simon with no other object but to see the Saviour. The probable answer to the question is, She had heard of the fame of Jesus, of his tenderness to the weak and unfortunate—she had learned from his enemies that he was the 'friend of publicans and sinners.' She now had an opportunity of seeing him, and she could not resist the inclination. For her to enter the holy house of a holy Pharisee, was the height of presumption; but she could not keep herself away. She appears to have had no other object but to manifest her love of the Saviour's character, and her contrition for her sins. She placed herself at the feet* of Jesus, and bursting into a flood of tears, which fell upon his feet, she wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them, and did him the honor to anoint them with the ointment. These were all expressions of high regard and reverence.

'Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a

* She is said, in the common version, to have stood *at his feet*, *behind him*, weeping. How was it possible, while Jesus *sat* at the table, that the woman could stand *at his feet* behind him? Dr. Campbell says, 'she must, in that case, have been under the table. The chairs on which the guests were seated would have precluded access from behind.' The difficulty is removed, if we reflect, that the Jews did not *sit* when they took their meals, but reclined upon couches, by which the table was surrounded, so that their feet extended out from the table on every side. In this position the feet were presented to any person who approached the table from without. This subject is considered at large in Campbell's Prelim. Diss. viii. part 3, sec. 3—6.

prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him,—for she is a sinner.' (Ver. 40.) This was the test with Simon. Holy people, as he supposed, would have no intercourse with the unholy, not so much even as to be touched by them. Jesus did not drive this sinner from his presence with indignation ; he permitted her to wash and anoint his feet, and this was sufficient to convince Simon, that he was not a prophet, but a vile impostor. These were his secret musings, and conclusions. Jesus knowing his thoughts, said, (ver. 40,) 'I have somewhat to say unto thee.' He rejoined, 'Master, say on ;' and then Jesus spoke the parable before us. 'There was a certain creditor, which had two debtors : the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.'

It will now be perceived at once, that Jesus uttered this parable to justify his own conduct in relation to the woman,—to produce in Simon the feeling of self-condemnation, and to show him, that although he thought this woman a very great sinner, and although she actually was a sinner, yet he was the greater sinner of the two. After showing that the creditor fully and frankly forgave both his debtors, Jesus asks Simon this question : 'Tell me, therefore, which will love him most.' (Ver. 42.) The case was so evident, that Simon could not but answer correctly, and just as Jesus intended he should answer—and in a manner, too, directly calculated to condemn himself—'I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.' (Ver. 43.) To this Jesus says, 'Thou hast rightly judged,' and immediately proceeds to make the application. He contrasts the coldness with which Simon had received him, with the warmth of this woman's love ; and love and gratitude being the essence of pure religion, he had made Simon acknowledge, in the case of the forgiven debtor, that as the woman had had more sins forgiven, and therefore loved more than he, so he, of course, was the greater sinner of the two. He said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman ? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no wa-

ter for my feet.' Thou didst not receive me with customary civility. 'But she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss,' (the usual sign of welcome,) 'but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; *therefore* she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' (Vers. 44—47.) Here the case stood before Simon in such a form as would enable him to understand it. The parable was framed for his benefit, and intended to suit his views of himself. In his own estimation he had sinned little, and he was the debtor who owed *fifty* pence. The woman, as he thought, had sinned much, and she was the debtor who owed *five hundred* pence. To the question, Which would love most, when both were freely forgiven,—he answered, He to whom *most* was forgiven. This was the case of the woman, according to Simon's view of her; and therefore he himself had decided, that she loved more than he. Jesus pointed out to him, that this was really the case; and that the woman's conduct justified the conclusion. Simon answered not a word. He stood self-condemned and self-upbraided before Jesus.

I have followed the most eminent commentators in rendering the Greek word *οτι*, *therefore*. It makes much difference, in the sense, whether we say 'her sins, which are many, are forgiven, *for* she loved much'; or, 'her sins, which are many, are forgiven, *therefore* she loved much.' In the former case, we make the forgiveness to be the consequence of her love; and in the latter we make her love to be the consequence of forgiveness. Which is correct? Evidently the latter. For besides the testimonies of Bp. Pearce, A. Clarke, Kenrick, Campbell, and Hammond, the reasonings of Whitby and Lightfoot are entirely conclusive. Dr. Whitby well observes, 'Christ saith not, Her sins were forgiven because she loved much, but this ought to be a token to thee, that her sins, which

rendered her unworthy to touch me, have been forgiven ; this great love to me being an indication of her deep sense of God's mercy to her in pardoning her many sins. And this do I, the prophet and Son of God, declare unto her. To this sense lead both the parable of the great debtor, to whom the Lord frankly had forgiven all, for he loved much because much had been forgiven, and the conclusion of it in these words, *he that hath less forgiven, loveth less*; whence it appears that *or*, here cannot be causal or intimate that she was forgiven much because she loved much ; but only consequential, denoting the effect, or indication of the forgiveness of her many sins.* Thus far Whitby. Lightfoot says, ' She had obtained remission of her sins before this action ; and from thence came this action, not from this action her forgiveness.

' Otherwise the similitude our Saviour propounds about forgiving the debt, would not be to the purpose at all. The debt is not released because the debtor loves his creditor; but the debtor loves because his debt is forgiven him. Remission goes before, and love follows :

' Christ doth not say, she had washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed me with ointment, therefore her sins are forgiven ; but, *for this cause, I say unto thee, her sins are forgiven her.* He tells Simon this that he might satisfy the murmuring Pharisee. ' Perhaps, Simon, thou wonderest within thyself, that since this hath been so lewd a woman, I should so much as suffer her to touch me ; but I must tell thee that it is very evident, even from this obsequiousness of hers, and the good offices she hath done to me, that her sins are forgiven her : she could never have given these testimonies and fruits of her gratitude and devotion, if she had still remained in her guilt, and not been loosed from her sins.' †

The lesson here taught Simon is a humiliating lesson for every Pharisee, and one that they all ought to learn.

People of this class can see sins in others, but they

* Com. on the Par.

† Works, xii. 82, 83.

never can see any in themselves ; and it is often necessary to present their characters, so that they shall not recognize them as their own, in order to procure from them a correct judgment thereon. When Nathan wished David to pass sentence on himself, he showed him his real character, as though it belonged to some other person ; and David said immediately, The man that hath done this shall surely die. Simon decided, by the help of the parable, that the outrageous sinner, as he regarded the woman, had, in fact, more love to God than he, and acknowledged the justice of Jesus in receiving her to his presence, and forgiving her sins. Reader, let us really be on our guard, lest we imbibe the spirit of the Pharisees. If we are truly better than others, we shall love them, and pity them, and be grateful to God that he hath made us to differ ; and we shall not claim a reward for this, but feel that the debt lies on us, a debt of gratitude—eternal gratitude ; love—eternal love.

PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.

Matt. xviii. 23—34.

'Therefore the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence ; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not ; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me ; Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.'

THERE are certain references to Jewish law in the course of this parable, which will probably be the better understood by the common reader, if we attempt an illustration of them, before entering into an explanation of the parable itself.

In the first place let it be observed, that the Jews were in the habit of selling their children in slavery, and sometimes themselves and their wives, for the payment of their debts ; and creditors had power to seize a Hebrew and his family, and make sale of them. (See Lev. xxv. 39, 47 ; 2 Kings iv. 1 ; Neh. v. 4—8 ; Isaiah l. 1.) This slavery was not *perpetual*, like that of the unhappy Africans in our own country ; for the Jews made a wide distinction between their slaves, those who were Hebrews

being treated with much greater lenity than those who were foreigners. One of the laws of Moses was, ‘If thou buy a *Hebrew* servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.’ (Exod. xxi. 2.) Thus Josephus finds fault with Herod for selling Jewish criminals to foreigners as perpetual slaves; and adds, concerning the thief, ‘He shall be sold, indeed, but not to foreigners, nor so that he be under perpetual slavery, for he must have been released after six years.’* ‘It is shown in Grotius that the Jews had only a right of seizing debtors for bond-men, or of selling them afterwards for six years, and that to one of their own nation. The custom was frequent with the Jews.’† The Jews were in the habit also of imprisoning men for debt, and sometimes of torturing the debtor, that if he had any property concealed, it might be delivered up, or that his relatives might be induced to ransom him. So says Dr. Campbell, and many other writers. ‘The jailors were not only allowed, but even commanded, to treat the wretches in their custody with every kind of cruelty, in order to extort payment from them, in case they had concealed any of their effects; or, if they had nothing, to wrest the sum owed, from the compassion of their relations and friends, who, to release an unhappy person, for whom they had a regard, from such extreme misery, might be induced to pay the debt; for, let it be observed, that the person of the insolvent debtor was absolutely in the power of the creditor, and at his disposal.’‡

The object of this parable was to show the obligation under which men are laid by the kindness and mercy of God to them, to exercise the spirit of forgiveness towards one another; and also to show that God will not permit the sin of ingratitude and of an unforgiving spirit to go unpunished.

* Antiq. xvi. 1.

† Elsley on Matt. xviii. 23. See also Horne’s Intro. iii. 419. Jahn’s Arch. Sec. 250. Brown’s Antiq. of Jews, ii. 96. Calmet’s Dic. Art. Slavery.

‡ Four Gospels, note on Matt. xvii. 34.

The parable was introduced in the following manner : Jesus had been giving directions to his apostles how they should proceed in the cases of those who trespassed against them. (Vers. 15—17.) After this instruction had been delivered, Peter came to Jesus, and said, ‘ How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times ? ’ (Ver. 21.) The reply of Jesus was, ‘ I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven,’ i. e. without any limits,—a proverbial expression. And thus the Saviour introduces the parable. The dealings of God with men, in the kingdom of the gospel, are like those of a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him who owed an *immense* sum—ten thousand talents. But because he could not pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant fell down, and entreated his lord to have patience, and he would pay him all ; whereupon the lord was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt. Here was a lesson which ought not to have been lost upon him. The king granted his request ; i. e. for the present he forbore to demand the payment, and put it off to a future time. This was all which the servant desired, (vers. 26, 32,) and all which is represented as being done, (ver. 34.) But instead of following the compassionate example of his master, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him an hundred pence, a trifle to what he owed his lord, and he took that servant by the throat, and demanded payment. His fellow servant made the same request of him, that he had himself made of his lord, and which had been granted him ; but he refused to grant it, and imprisoned his debtor, till he should pay the debt. This act of injustice and ingratitude was reported to his lord, who called him, and said unto him, ‘ O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me : shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was

due unto him.' Jailors, as we have shown, in that age, used torture to obtain the confession of crime, or the payment of debts, if the debtor was supposed to have any property concealed; and sometimes, by the cruelty, to induce the relations of the prisoner to pay the debt for him. 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye, from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses;' i. e. God will punish you justly, for ingratitude and for a want of forgiveness. Cruelty is a greater sin in those who feel and know that *they have* had much forgiven; and such deserve a severer retribution, than those who are not sensible of the benefits which have been conferred on them. We are not to suppose however, that Jesus meant that the conduct of the Divine Being towards the unforgiving, was in all respects, like that of the lord who thrust his servant into prison, and delivered him to the tormentors; i. e. we are not from this to attribute any cruelty to God. For first, nothing is more foreign to his nature; and second, nothing is more foreign to the nature of Christ, the author of the parable; and third, this would be charging upon God the very conduct which was so highly disapproved in the unforgiving servant. The great sin charged on him was, that he refused to forgive, and treated his debtor with cruelty; and from this to charge the same conduct on God, would be to subvert the very design of the parable, which was to inculcate the virtue of tenderness from the divine example. We are not to suppose that God resembles this king in his execrable cruelty, any more than he resembled the unjust judge in his injustice. (Luke xviii. 2—5.) There was a certain reason why God was compared to that unjust judge, and that reason was sufficient to justify the comparison; and when we have ascertained what that reason was, we should pursue the comparison no further. Thus it is said of Christ, he should come '*as a thief in the night.*' The object here is, to show that he would come suddenly and unexpectedly, when men were not looking for him. This was sufficient to justify the comparison, and it should be pursued no further; for it would be folly to go on and say,

that Jesus came like a thief, to steal, to kill and destroy. So in the parable before us, the object was to show that God is disposed to kindness and lenity ; that men should be influenced by his example ; he disapproved and would punish an unkind and unforgiving spirit. In this respect he was like the king, though he did not resemble the king in his cruelty. Having thus ascertained the object of the parable, it is enough, and we need pursue the comparison to no greater extent. It is a good remark which we find in the old anonymous commentary, ‘In parables we are to consider the scope and intention of the speaker, and not over curiously to discuss every particular : so here we must know, that God doth not always show extreme rigor, until the vindication of his justice, or the compulsion of a sinner to repentance (which light afflictions do not always effect) necessarily require it. * * * * * Similitudes, they say, do not run on four feet, they will go current if they agree in one, or a few points, according to the scope thereof, or intent of the speaker.’ *

It is plainly to be perceived, that Jesus intended, by this parable, to make the divine character the great foundation of human rectitude, and to show men what they ought to do, by referring them to the conduct of the Divine Being. When he inculcated the duty of benevolence, in his Sermon on the Mount, he predicated the obligation of men to exercise this spirit towards one another, of the fact that God exercised the same spirit toward all mankind. (See Matt. v. 44—48, and Luke vi. 32—36.) He exhorted men to love their enemies, to bless such as cursed them, to do good to such as hated them ; and to encourage them in such a course of conduct, he pointed to the dealings of God with men. ‘He maketh his sun to rise on the *evil* and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the *unjust*.’ ‘He is kind unto the *unthankful* and to the *evil*.’ And to show that he made the divine conduct the foundation or criterion of human rectitude, he closed that beautiful moral lesson by saying, ‘Be ye therefore perfect,

* Assembly’s Annotations on this parable.
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even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' The object of the parable before us, was to teach that men ought to reflect on the dealings of God with them, and discharge their obligations for his kindness to them, by a tender and compassionate conduct towards their fellow creatures. This parable Jesus carried out, and ended, according to the prevalent habits and customs; but not with any design, as we have said, to represent any cruelty in the divine administration, since that would charge on God the very conduct condemned in the servant. The great truth is made sufficiently plain, that a want of forgiveness in those who are sensible they have been forgiven, is doubly sinful, and shall not escape an adequate punishment.

It is of the first importance, that we notice here, that men should never ascribe any disposition, conduct or attribute to God, which they would regret to see in man. The character of God is the standard of perfection. '*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.'* Whatever is right in God, is right in his creatures. Whatever is justice in him, is justice in us. Whatever is mercy in him, is mercy in us. Whatever is wrong in us, would be more highly wrong in him, and whatever is unjust in us, would be more highly unjust in him. Hence God enjoins it upon us, to be holy, for *he is holy*. The holiness of God, is such a holiness as we need; and therefore a right state of mind is called a *conformity* and a *reconciliation* to him. How important a lesson is this to those who ascribe to God a disposition and purpose which would disgrace mankind. Cruelty and partiality are the distinguishing characteristics of much of the divinity of the present age. The gospel breathes the spirit of *peace* on earth, and *good will* to men; and those who have imbibed this gospel, will find it operating on their hearts, to induce them to 'love their enemies,' and to 'be kind to the unthankful and to the evil.'

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Luke x. 30—35.

'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.'

THE occasion which called forth this parable, will be seen in the passage which immediately precedes it. It seems that a certain lawyer came, with no very good motives, to the Saviour, and put this question: 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' (Ver. 25.) In return Jesus said to him, 'What is written in the law? how readest thou?' (Ver. 26.) The lawyer replied with a quotation from the law—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; *and thy neighbor as thyself.*' (Ver. 27.) Jesus informed him that he had answered correctly, and added, 'This do, and thou shalt live.' (Ver. 28.) It occurred to the lawyer probably, that he might be suspected by Jesus of having violated that part of the commandment which required him to love his *neighbor* as he loved himself; and being 'willing to justify himself,' he asked the question, 'And who is my neighbor?' (Ver. 29.) This question shows us at once that the Jews restricted the sense of the commandment, and justified themselves in the hatred of some nations, by

maintaining that they were not neighbors. ‘Who is my neighbor?’ said the lawyer. The answer is found in the parable itself; and it should be observed that Jesus so framed the parable that the lawyer was constrained to answer his own question, and to answer it, too, in such a way as to condemn himself. Dr. Lightfoot says, ‘This doubt and form of questioning, the lawyer had learned out of the common school; where it is taught in Aruch, ‘He excepts all Gentiles when he saith, thy neighbor.’* Lightfoot continues,—Maimonides saith, ‘An Israelite killing a stranger inhabitant, he doth not die for it by the Sanhedrim; because it is said, If any one lift himself up against his *neighbor*. And it is not necessary to say, he does not die upon the account of a Gentile; for they are not esteemed by them for their *neighbor*.’ ‘The Gentiles, amongst whom and us there is no war, and so those that are keepers of sheep amongst the Israelites, and the like,—we are not to contrive their death: but if they be in any danger of death, we are not bound to deliver them: e. g. If any of them fall into the sea, you shall not need to take him out; for it is said, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor, *but such a one is not thy neighbor.*’†

The Jews contracted a great aversion to other nations, more particularly to the Samaritans, with whom they would hold no intercourse. (See John iv. 9, and Luke ix. 53.) They were divided by national prejudices, and by religious animosity. As worshippers of God, they were perpetually at competition, having set up temple against temple, and altar against altar.‡ By hating such, the lawyer had no suspicion that he violated the divine command to love his *neighbor*; and he detected in a moment the supposed fault of Christ, in giving too wide a latitude to that word. This was the cause of the question, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ To this question, we have stated, Jesus intended the lawyer himself should furnish an answer; and with that design, proposed the parable before us.

‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.’

* Works, xii. 102. † Idem.

‡ Brown’s Antiq. of Jews, i. 611, 612.

Here are two things to be specially noted. 1st, The man; and 2d, the road on which he travelled. This man, it must be remembered, was a Jew. A certain Jew went down to Jericho. Dr. Campbell translates the sentence, ‘A man of Jerusalem travelling to Jericho.’ * The whole energy of the parable depends on this circumstance, that the person who received the charitable aid, was a Jew, and the person who afforded it, a Samaritan. The road was that which led from Jerusalem to Jericho. This should be observed, as it will shortly be referred to again.

‘And fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.’ The scene of this parable is very judiciously laid. Jesus placed it on the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho, because the chain of mountains which extended from the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem to the plain of Jericho, was always infested with robbers. No place can be imagined more favorable for the attacks of banditti, or better adapted than were its caves for their concealment; † and indeed, on account of the many robbe-

* See his valuable note on the verse.

† In Buckingham’s Travels in Palestine, we have the following account of this road:

‘The whole of this road from Jerusalem to the Jordan is held to be the most dangerous about Palestine, and, indeed, in this portion of it, the very aspect of the scenery is sufficient, on the one hand, to tempt to robbery and murder, and on the other, to occasion a dream of it to those who pass that way. It was partly to prevent any accident happening to us in this early stage of our journey, and partly, perhaps, to calm our fears on that score, that a messenger had been despatched by our guides to an encampment of their tribe near, desiring them to send an escort to meet us at this place. We were met here accordingly, by a band of about twenty persons on foot, all armed with matchlocks, and presenting the most ferocious and robberlike appearance that could be imagined. The effect of this was heightened by the shouts which they sent forth from hill to hill, and which were re-echoed through all the valleys, while the bold projecting crags of rock, the dark shadows in which every thing lay buried below, the towering height of the cliffs above, and the forbidding desolation which every where reigned around, presented a picture that was quite in harmony throughout all its parts. It made us feel most forcibly, the propriety of its being chosen as the scene of the delightful tale of compassion which we had before so often admired for its doctrine, independently of its local beauty. One must be amid these wild and gloomy solitudes, surrounded by an armed

ries committed there, it was called, as Jerome says, *the bloody way*. The classes, or stations of the priests and Levites were fixed at Jericho as well as at Jerusalem, and 12,000 of them are said to have resided there; a circumstance which accounts very naturally for the priest and Levite happening to pass in that road.* It should be remembered, that they were of the same nation with the Jew; but when they saw him in his miserable condition, they passed by and gave him no relief.

At length, 'A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came

band, and feel the impatience of the traveller who rushes on to catch a new view to every pass and turn; one must be alarmed at the very tramp of the horses' hoofs rebounding through the caverned rocks, and at the savage shouts of the footmen, scarcely less loud than the echoing thunder produced by the discharge of their pieces in the valleys; one must witness all this upon the spot, before the full force and beauty of the admirable story of the Good Samaritan can be perceived. Here, pillage, wounds, and death would be accompanied with double terror, from the frightful aspect of every thing around. Here, the unfeeling act of passing by a fellow-creature in distress, as the priest and Levite are said to have done, strikes one with horror, as an act almost more than inhuman. And here, too, the compassion of the Good Samaritan is doubly virtuous, from the purity of the motive which must have led to it, in a spot where no eyes were fixed on him to draw forth the performance of any duty, and from the bravery which was necessary to admit of a man's exposing himself by such delay, to the risk of a similar fate to that from which he was endeavoring to rescue a fellow-creature.'

Beausobre and L' Enfant, say, 'De Jerusalem à Jericho. S. Jerome remarque qu'entre ces deux Villes il y avoit un endroit fameux par les brigandages et les meurtres qui s' commettoient.'

* Dr. Lightfoot shows, that there were twelve courses of priests stationed in Jericho. (Works, x. 94. xii. 9, 102, 103.) 'The Jews, upon the sound of this and divers other things at the temple, do hyperbolize thus: "Even from Jericho they heard the noise of the great gate of the temple, when it opened. From Jericho they heard the ringing of the migrephah. From Jericho they heard the noise of the engine, that Ben Katten made for the laver. From Jericho they heard the voice of the crier, that called them to their services. From Jericho they heard the sound of the pipe. From Jericho they heard the sound of the cymbal. From Jericho they heard the sound of the song. From Jericho they heard the sound of the trumpets. And, some say, also, the voice of the high priest, when he uttered the name Jehovah, on the day of expiation, &c." The truth of which things is not to be pleaded, seeing it is apparent that they are uttered by way of hyperbole: only it may not be improper to observe, how common the phrase was "from Jerusalem to Jericho." (Works, ix. 416.)

where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine,* (articles with which travellers in the East frequently furnished themselves,) and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.' The Samaritans were a people towards whom the Jews cherished an unconquerable hatred ; and they, on their part, resented the conduct of the Jews, with great indignation. The evangelists furnish proof of this. On passing through Samaria, Jesus, on a certain occasion, asked water of a woman of that country ; and she marvelled, saying, ' How is it that thou, *being a Jew*, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews *have no dealings with the Samaritans*.' This enmity was carried to such an extent, that the woman was surprised to find a Jew asking of her so small a favor as a draught of water. So, on another occasion, as Jesus was travelling towards Jerusalem, he sent messengers before him, to a Samaritan village, to make ready for him. Because he was going to Jerusalem, the Samaritans would not receive him ; and the disciples immediately, in the common spirit of their countrymen, requested permission of Christ to command fire from heaven to consume them ; a request for which they received a severe rebuke from their Master.

The Samaritan in the parable, when he came to the wounded Jew, forgets all the indignities his countryman had suffered from that nation, and immediately began to afford him all the relief in his power. Jesus represents him, as parting with all the money he had about his person, to pay the expenses at the inn ; and leaving his promise, when he separated, that, if there were any further charge, he would see it paid.

* 'Oil and Wine.' 'These were used by the ancients in the cure of bruises and wounds. "In vulnerum curatione lanæ succidae vicem implet, nunc ex vino et oleo, nunc ex posea. (Vide Cels. lib. v. c. 36.) Elstey on the place. Lightfoot quotes from Hieros Beracoth, fol. 3. 1, the following tradition : 'They spread a plaster for the sick on the sabbath day ; that is, upon condition they had mingled it with wine and oil on the evening of the sabbath. But if they have not mixed it on the sabbath, it is forbidden.' (Works, xii. 104.)

Sterne thus fancifully and beautifully describes the workings of the Samaritan's mind at the sight of the wounded Jew : " As he approached the place where the unfortunate man lay, the instant he beheld him, no doubt, some such train of reflections as this would rise in his mind. " Good God ! what a spectacle of misery do I behold—a man stripped of his raiment—wounded—lying languishing before me upon the ground, just ready to expire,—without the comfort of a friend to support him in his last agonies, or the prospect of a hand to close his eyes when his pains are over. But perhaps my concern should lessen, when I reflect on the relations in which we stand to each other—that he is a Jew, and I a Samaritan.—But are we not still both men—partakers of the same nature—and subject to the same evils ?—Let me change conditions with him for a moment, and consider, had his lot befallen me as I journeyed in the way, what measure I should have expected at his hand—Should I wish, when he beheld me wounded and half dead, that he should shut up his bowels of compassion from me, and double the weight of my miseries, by passing by and leaving them unpitied ?—But I am a stranger to the man :—Be it so ;—but I am no stranger to his condition—misfortunes are of no particular tribe or nation, but belong to us all, and have a general claim upon us, without distinction of climate, country, or religion. Besides, though I am a stranger—it is no fault of his that I do not know him, and therefore inequitable he should suffer by it.—Had I known him, possibly I should have had cause to love and pity him the more—for aught I know, he is some one of uncommon merit, whose life is rendered still more precious, as the lives and happiness of others may be involved in it : Perhaps at this instant that he lies here forsaken, in all this misery, a whole virtuous family is joyfully looking for his return, and affectionately counting the hours of his delay. Oh ! did they know what evil had befallen him—how would they fly to succor him !—Let me then hasten to supply those tender offices of binding up his wounds, and carrying him to a place of safety—or, if that assistance comes too late, I shall comfort

him at least in his last hour—and if I can do nothing else, —I shall soften his misfortunes by dropping a tear of pity over them.” *

Having thus gone through the parable, Jesus proposes this question to the lawyer : ‘ Which now of these three (i. e. the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan) thinkest thou was *neighbor* unto him that fell among the thieves ? What answer did the lawyer return ? The very answer that he was obliged to return, although it was against his own practice, and a direct condemnation of the customs of his countrymen. He declared that the Samaritan who showed mercy on him, was neighbor to him that fell among thieves. And here the design of the parable appears—it was to show the lawyer that, while he hated other nations, he did not obey the divine law ; and that the practice of the Jews, in limiting the command to the love of their own countrymen was highly erroneous ; that our neighbors are not confined to the country in which we live, nor to the sect to which we belong ; but any person in distress, and needing our assistance, is our neighbor, and it is our duty to love him, and assist him by the means which God has placed in our hands. We have here another instance of the success of our Saviour, in producing the strongest feelings of self-condemnation by means of his parables.

The occasion is closed by the Saviour with a beautiful moral—‘ Go thou and do likewise.’ Imitate the good Samaritan ; let your love, like his, know no bounds : do good to the unfortunate of every name and nation. This is the sense of the divine command, ‘ Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ Let the emotions of benevolence predominate in our hearts towards all mankind ; reckon them as related to us, as being members of the great family to which we belong, and consider ourselves under obligations to render them kindness and compassion whenever occasion demands.

‘ Go thou and do likewise.’ Christians of the present age, here is a lesson for you. Have you felt a *peculiar*

* Sermon on the Par.

friendship for those of your own sect? Where will you find anything in the conduct of your Lord, that will stand as an example for this? Have you possessed the spirit of bitterness and wrath towards persons of other faiths and names? Have you calumniated their characters, misrepresented their opinions, and done them other injuries? Remember the conduct of the good Samaritan, and the design which your Lord had in view in framing the parable in which his benevolent character is drawn.

It is worthy of remark, that the parables of our Lord are all fruitful in moral sentiment, and inculcate, in the strongest manner, the practice of the virtues. Inimitable as they are in their descriptions, they are to be prized above all, for the moral tendency they must exert on every mind, suitably penetrated with the sentiments they contain. No teacher has ever exhibited a more illustrious triumph of compassion over principles by which it was forcibly counteracted, than we find in the case of the Samaritan.

PARABLE OF A MAN WHO DOATED ON RICHES.

Luke xii. 16—20.

'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?'

THERE will be no difficulty in ascertaining the object of this parable, if we consider the circumstances which

called it forth. A person came to Jesus with this request : 'Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.' (Ver. 13.) He declined an interference in business which did not concern him. 'Who made me a judge, or divider over you?' (ver. 14,) said he. He embraced the opportunity to give this caution : 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness,' and immediately adds this reason, 'for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' (Ver. 15.) To illustrate the truth of this observation, was the object of the parable before us.

'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.' His wealth did not increase from rapine, or extortion, or injustice, nor from denying himself the common comforts of life, nor from laborious exertions ; but in the most innocent way possible, by the bounty of divine Providence, in making his lands fruitful, the produce of which was so great he knew not where to store it. 'And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow (or lay up) my fruits?' His was the case of a man whose heart was set solely on earthly riches. God had blessed him with great possessions ; and it did not occur to him, that he was thereby laid under obligation to assist the needy ; his whole care was to lay it up for future years. 'And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow (or lay up) all my fruits and my goods.' Not one cent for the poor ; all is for himself, and the hoarding up of these goods was his sole object. 'And I will say to my soul,* (another expression to signify, I will say to myself,) Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Here the character which Jesus was drawing is fully developed. This person's sole hope of happiness for the future lay in his riches, and, satisfied to the full with these, he asked no more. Doing good to his fellow-men, im-

* Beausobre and L' Enfant say, 'Je dirai à mon ame.' 'C'est à dire, je me dirai à moi même.' Note on the place.

proving his own mind, cultivating in his heart the Christian virtues, making himself acquainted with the joyful tidings of the gospel, and preparing for the day of adversity, sickness and death, by cherishing the hope inspired by that gospel,—these were not the objects of his consideration. To have much goods, to take ease, eat, drink and be merry, were the whole objects of his life, and death came not into his thoughts. But this man was just as insecure as others—a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things he possesseth. And hence, it was said to him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.’* Thou canst not carry thy goods with thee to the grave, ‘then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?’ Immediately on concluding the parable, Jesus adds, (and herein the true application of the parable is seen) ‘So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.’

We infer from this parable, the important maxim deduced from the parable of the ‘treasure hid in the field,’ viz. that true wisdom and understanding are the greatest of all riches ; and that without these, the goods of this world are not worth the having. Hence the greatest of all folly is, for a man to place all his trust in worldly riches, to rely on them entirely for future comfort and support, and make no preparation for the hour of adversity and death. We have a remarkable instance of true wisdom in the case of Solomon, about the time of his elevation to the throne. He had the privilege to make any request he was disposed to. He did not ask for riches, nor for victory over his enemies, nor for long life ; but, considering his weakness, and the important duties that devolved upon him in the office he filled, he prayed, ‘Give, therefore, thy servant an

* *Thy soul shall be required of thee.* Beausobre and L'Enfant remark that the expression is—‘Hebraisme pour dire tu mourras.’ (Job xxvii. 8.) According to Dr. Whitby, the Jews believed that when a man died the angels demanded and carried his soul away. If he were a good man, his soul was carried to the garden of Eden, *per manum angelorum* ; if he were wicked, evil spirits carried his soul to the appointed place. See his Com. on Luke xii. 20, and xvi. 22.

understanding heart.' And infinite wisdom vouchsafed to reply, ' Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast no asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy words : lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. (1 Kings iii. 11—13.) Solomon's supreme desire was for true wisdom, and to this was added every other good. He might well say, then, as he did in after life, ' Wisdom is the *principal* thing ; therefore, get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' (Prov. iv. 7.) He that hath wisdom will enjoy all else that he possesses ; and hence the Saviour saith, (Matt. vi. 33,) ' Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Reader, your chief aim should be to be wise. Seek a knowledge of God, and of your own duty. Do your duty faithfully, and you will have a competent portion of this world's goods. Never let a desire of gain engross your whole heart. Make a prudent use of what God shall give you—be kind to the distressed—remember the uncertainty of life—and set not your heart so much on this world, as to be greatly surprised and disappointed when God shall say, ' This night thy soul shall be required of thee.'

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.**Luke xiii. 6—9.**

‘A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down : why cumbereth it the ground ? And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well : and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.’

We shall be led to the true application of this parable, by the preceding context. At the first verse of the chapter, we are informed, that some who were present with the Saviour, told him of the Galileans, ‘whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.’ These Galileans had come up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices ; and when assembled for that purpose, Pilate, for their opposition to the Roman government, as it is supposed, attacked them with an armed force, and put them to death. So singular a calamity might have induced the people to think they had been guilty of some enormous crime, which God had seen fit to punish in this signal manner ; but Jesus cautions them against such a conclusion, by saying, ‘Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell you, nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish ;’ (vers. 2, 3;) i. e. in a like way, in a similar manner. This cannot be applied to the future state, because it is evident that Jesus intended there would be a similarity between the destruction of the Jews and the Galileans here spoken of. The Saviour then referred to the case of eighteen men on whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, and inquired, ‘Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell at Jerusalem ?’ (Ver. 4.) This question he

answered in the negative, and added, ‘ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ (Ver. 5.) It is a fact which should not be forgotten, that there was a peculiar resemblance between the destruction of the Galileans, and of those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, when compared with the destruction of the Jews. The first mentioned, it is thought, were slain for their opposition to the Roman government; for the Galileans had a strong antipathy to the Romans.

Now the Jews, at the destruction of their city, perished, not only by the assaults of the Roman armies, but they fell in the temple, many of them their blood was mingled with their sacrifices, and they were buried in the ruins of the temple. Josephus declares, that the Jews were first incited to rebellion by those who persuaded them, that paying tribute was a sign of slavery, and this became the seed of their future calamities.* When the war broke out, they were attacked, not only by the Romans, but they fought one against another, both in the city and temple. That many of the Jews perished as did the Galileans, Josephus also testifies. Under the president Cumanus, twenty-five thousand perished *about the temple* at the feast of passover; † under Florus there was a multifarious slaughter of them fighting *in the temple*, and one Manaheim was slain as he worshipped there; ‡ that many of the zealots perished in the temple, and washed the holy ground with their blood, § and that the Idumeans coming in to their help, eight thousand five hundred of the party of Ananus, the high priest, were slain, so that the whole outward temple was washed over with blood; || that in that three-fold sedition which arose in Jerusalem, betwixt Eleazer keeping the inward temple, John with his associates seizing the outward temple, and Simon the upper city; the temple was every where polluted with slaughters, the wea-

* Antiq. l. xviii. c. 1. l. xx. c. 5. De Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 1, 12, 13.

† Antiq. l. xx. c. 4.

‡ De Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 31.

§ De Bell. Jud. l. iv. c. 14.

|| De Bell. Jud. l. xvi. c. 17.

pons flew every where, and fell upon the priests, and those who officiated at the altar—many who came from far to worship fell *before their sacrifices*, and sprinkled the altar with their blood, insomuch that the blood of the dead carcases made a pool in the holy court.

At the feast of unleavened bread, Eleazer and his companions, opening a gate for the people that came to worship, and offer sacrifice, John, taking advantage of that opportunity, sent in with them many of his party, having short swords under their garments, who invaded Eleazer's party, and filled that temple with the blood of the zealots, and of the people;* and when Titus fought against the temple, a multitude of dead bodies *lay round the altar*, and the blood ran down the steps of the temple, and *many perished by the ruins of the towers or porches*.† We have been thus particular, in order to restore to its true sense an oft perverted passage of scripture. These words,—‘ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,’ (xiii. 3, 5,) have been cited, frequently, to establish the doctrine of endless torment. It is evident, that Jesus had reference to the destruction of the Galileans, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell ; and says to the Jews, ‘ Except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish ;’ i. e. in the same way or manner ; and we have shown, by the quotations from Josephus, that the Jewish nation did perish in that manner. The words did not refer, and should not be applied, to mankind generally, but to the Jews in particular. The word rendered *likewise*, is *ωσαυρως*, in ver. 3., and *ομοιως* in ver. 5. The former word signifies, according to the best Greek Lexicons, *in the same way, or like manner, just so, exactly thus* ; and the latter signifies, *in a like manner, alike, just as*. ‡

Bishop Pearce paraphrases the passage, ‘ Except ye, the nation of the Jews, repent, your state shall be destroyed.’ § Hammond is to the same purport—‘ If you con-

* De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 1.

† De Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. 4.

‡ See Parkhurst and Donnegan, among others.

§ Com. on passage.

turne your present wicked practices, raising sedition under pretence of piety, as frequently you are apt to do, then as they perished on the day of Pascha at their sacrifice, so shall a multitude of you on that very day, in the temple, be slaughtered like sheep, and that for the same cause, a sedition raised in the city.* Adam Clarke says, on the words, ‘ye shall all *likewise* perish’—‘ye shall perish in a like way, in the same manner. This prediction of our Lord was literally fulfilled. When the city was taken by the Romans, multitudes of the priests, &c. who were going on with their sacrifices, were slain, and their blood was mingled with the blood of their victims ; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of the walls, houses and temples.’†

Thus we have traced the preceding context. The cases of the Galileans, and those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, had been referred to, and Jesus had told the Jews, that unless they repented, i. e. broke off their sins, and turned to righteousness, they would perish in a *like manner* with the others ; and as they did not repent, the prediction was literally fulfilled. Here Jesus introduced the parable of the barren fig-tree. The owner came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. He said to the keeper of his vineyard, these three years have I sought fruit on this tree, and find none—cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ? He is persuaded to let it alone one year, till it shall be dug about and nurtured ; after which, if it bore fruit, well ; if not, it was to be destroyed.

By the fig-tree our Lord intended the house of Israel. Isaiah described them under the figure of a vine that brought forth wild grapes, which in consequence, was to be destroyed. (v. 1—7.)

The fig-tree brought forth no fruit. The Jews were

* Par. and Annot. on the passage.

† Com. on the passage. See also a very valuable note in Whitby’s Commentary on this passage. *Peribitis simili modo*, saith Grotius, ‘id est, inter ruinas urbis totius, cuius turris ista imaginem gerit.’ (Annot. in Lucan, xiii. 5.)

barren in works of righteousness : they were ‘*a seed of evil doers.*’

The fig-tree was preserved after it was worthy only of destruction, and was nourished, but to no effect; it continued barren. Thus the house of Israel had been dealt with. They had long been unfruitful, and were fit for the fate which awaited them. God sent them his Son to preach to them, and to them alone ; the apostles were sent to this nation only ; and the gospel was faithfully proclaimed to them. No other tree was nurtured, until this fig-tree, after all the care bestowed on it, had failed to bear fruit, and had been cut down.

This fig-tree was cut down. The axe was laid at the root. See the notes on the parable of the Axe. The observations of Adam Clarke on Matt. iii. 10, are worthy of insertion here. ‘It was customary, with the Jewish prophets, to represent the kingdoms, nations and individuals whose ruin they predicted, under the figure of forests and trees, doomed to be cut down. (See Jer. xlvi. 22, 23 ; Ezek. xxxi. 3, 11, 12.) The Jewish nation is the tree, and the Romans the axe, which, by the just judgment of God, was speedily to cut it down. It has been well observed, that there is an allusion here to a woodman, who, having marked a tree for excision, lays his axe at its root, and strips off his outer garment, that he may wield his blows more powerfully, and that his work may be quickly performed. For about sixty years before the coming of Christ, this axe had been lying at the root of the Jewish tree, Judea having been a province to the Roman Empire, from the time that Pompey took the city of Jerusalem, during the contentions of the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, which was about sixty-three years before the coming of Christ. (See Josephus, Antiq. l. xiv. c. 1—5.) But as the country might be still considered as in the hands of the Jews, though subject to the Romans, and God had waited on them now nearly ninety years from the above time, expecting them to bring forth fruit, and none was yet produced, he kept the Romans, as an axe,

lying at the root of the tree, who were ready to cut it down the moment God gave them the permission.*

PARABLE OF THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE.

Luke xiii. 24—29.

'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.'

THIS seems to be a collection of the sayings of our Lord, which Luke appears to have judged best, on this occasion to connect with one another. (See Matt. vii. 13; 21—23. Also xxv. 10—12. Also viii. 11, 12.)

The parable and the application are here closely blended, so that it is with difficulty we can separate the one from the other. This will not, however, hinder us from obtaining the true sense.

It seems that a person came to Jesus with this question: 'Lord, are there few that be saved?' (Ver. 23.) He replied, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' &c. It ought, in the first place, to be settled, what did this person mean, when he inquired, 'Are there few that be *saved*?'. Did he intend to inquire, Are there few who will finally be saved from hell torments in the world to come? We think

* Com. on Matt. xiii. 10.

not. In order to ascertain the proper import of this question, we must seek the true sense of the word *saved*. It is generally supposed that it signifies deliverance from misery in the future existence; but we are confident that a brief examination, will show the incorrectness of that supposition. Horne says, ‘It is not uncommon, even in the best versions, to find meanings put upon the sacred text, which are totally foreign to the intention of the inspired penmen. If the translators of our common version, had rendered the original of Acts ii. 47, literally, it would have run thus—the Lord added daily to the church, *the saved*, that is, those who were saved from their sins and prejudices.’* Dr. Whitby says, ‘The Christians are styled *the saved*. So 1 Cor. i. 18, to us *the saved*, Christ crucified is the power of God; and when the means of salvation, or that grace of God which brings salvation, was vouchsafed to them, salvation is said to come, Luke xix. 9; Rom. xi. 11, or to be sent to them, Acts xiii. 16; xxviii. 28.’† The fact should be kept in remembrance, that this expression—*the saved*—was a common term that the Christians chose by which to designate themselves. They did not mean by it, persons who had been translated to an immortal existence, but persons who had been turned from darkness to light, from the power of sin and satan unto God, and who had been brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Thus, when the jailor said to Paul and Silas, ‘Sirs, what must I do to *be saved*?’ the import was—what must I do to be one of the saved? what must I do to be as you are? And hence they returned the very answer which, in that case, we should have expected, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.’ (Acts xvi. 31.) The intention, therefore, of the person who asked Jesus the question, ‘Are there few that be saved?’ seems to have been this—Are there few that have embraced the religion you teach? Is it to be embraced by many, or confined to a few? He seems to have expected to justify his rejection of the gospel by

* Intro. ii. 683, 684.

† Com. on Acts ii. 47.

the example of the many. So saith Dr. Hammond. ‘The clear meaning of this uncertain man’s question will be this,—whether this doctrine or faith of Christ, so contrary to the humor and passions of the world, should be able to propagate itself, and prove so successful as to be received by many, or whether it should be contained and enclosed within a narrow pale, that so he might either resist Christ with the many, or have the honor of being one of the few singular persons that received him. And accordingly Christ’s answer is to put him on that *narrow path which leadeth to life*, that the *few* were likely to *find*, the way of infidelity being so broad and beaten, though it led to absolute destruction.’* Locke says that St. Paul, ‘speaking of the Gentiles, calls their being brought back again, from their apostacy, into the kingdom of God, *their being saved.*’†

Jesus replies, to the question asked, ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ Entering at the strait gate was embracing the religion of Christ, and was the same thing as being saved. Hence Kenrick very judiciously observes; ‘Believing in Christ, is, with propriety, called being saved, because it was attended with temporal deliverance; whereas unbelief produced inevitable destruction, in the calamities which awaited the Jewish nation. Christ, therefore, in his answer to the question, exhorts the person who made it, and others who might hear it, to enter the strait gate, that is, to embrace his religion, which was at that time attended with many difficulties, and which might fitly be compared to entering a strait or narrow passage; and he enforces this exhortation, by assuring them that the time would come, when many would seek an entrance into the kingdom of the Messiah, but would be refused admission.’‡

* Dr. Hammond has a very long note on this verse, which is worthy of careful perusal. It is too long for insertion here; but those who have not his Commentary, will find it principally copied in Paige’s Selections, pp. 59—62

† Note on Eph. ii. 8.

‡ Expos. on the passage.

The very exhortation, ‘strive to enter in,’ shows that there were difficulties to encounter. These difficulties, however, were not in the nature of the religion of Christ, abstractly considered ; but existed in the errors and vices of the times, and the corrupt prejudices of the age, to which his religion was directly opposed. This state of things made the entrance into the gospel difficult, and men had to strive to attain it. Had the religion of Jesus been the popular religion, embraced and countenanced by the rich and great, men naturally, and from motives of worldly interest, would have embraced it. If they had striven at all in that case, it must have been to have kept out.

The blessed doctrine of universal grace at the present day, like Christianity in the primitive age, is opposed by the proud, the self-righteous, and those who *call themselves* religious ; and it hence requires an effort on the part of those who embrace it, to rise above the influences of the world, and sacrifice all minor considerations to the cause of truth. Popular prejudice, in the days of Christ, set, like the current of a river, against the truth ; and those who followed him, were obliged to encounter this obstacle, and gain truth under all these disadvantages. For this reason, entrance into the gospel was represented by a *strait gate*, to which men had access by striving.

But there is another fact to be noticed. Not every one that did strive was able to enter in. ‘Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.’ This seems to be a hard case, that after endeavoring to enter the gate of the gospel, they should be excluded. For what reason was this ? Answer, Because they did not strive soon enough. While the enemies of Jesus were comparatively safe, eating, and drinking and making merry, they could not profess the name of Christ before men ; but when thick troubles began to gather upon the Jewish church and state, and the divine favor began to be manifested in an unusual manner in favor of the persecuted religion of Jesus, then they turned their eyes to him, and cried, ‘Lord, Lord, open the gate of the gospel unto us.’

To these events the following words of Christ are applicable. ‘ Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, *when he cometh in the glory of his Father*, with the holy angels ;’ and Jesus assured them that this should take place during the natural lives of that generation. (Mark viii. 38, compared with ix. 1.) To illustrate this fact, the parable now under consideration was spoken. ‘ When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are : depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.’ The purport of this advice is, Strive to enter *now* into the acceptance and profession of my gospel ; be not ashamed of me or of my doctrine, before this sinful generation. If you do not embrace the present opportunity, the time will come when you will regret it. Your nation will soon be overthrown with the most dreadful calamities ; and then not a hair on the heads of my disciples shall be hurt. When that time comes, it will be too late for you to enter the kingdom of God ; the door will be shut ; you will wish you had embraced past opportunities ; but it will be of no avail ; you will put forth pretences and claims to be considered my followers, but you will not have the test of true discipleship. At that critical time, there cannot be this change of character. Christians then will be Christians, and enemies must remain enemies—the judgments cannot be averted. ‘ He that is unjust will then be unjust still ; he that is filthy will be filthy still ; he that is righteous will be righteous still ; and he that is holy will be holy still.’ (Rev. xxii. 11.*) I shall then command you to depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

* That this passage had its fulfilment at the coming of Christ to destroy the Jewish state, is evident from comparing Rev. xxii. 10, 11 and 12.

Vers. 28, 29. ‘There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye [the Jews] shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the *kingdom of God*, and you yourselves thrust out. And they [the Gentiles] shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and sit down in the *kingdom of God*.’ That the kingdom of God signified the spiritual reign of the Messiah, all commentators have conceded ; and this we have shown in the notes on the parable of the Offending Hand or Foot, pp. 57, 58. The Jews, when the time of sober reflection came, would see that Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, did in reality embrace Christ, by faith in the promises made to them, and in this sense, they entered the kingdom of God. These patriarchs, and the prophets, the Jews held in the highest estimation ; and nothing could be a greater grief to them, than to see them in the kingdom of God, and they themselves cast out ; and when that took place, therefore, it is well said, ‘there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ the most demonstrable signs of sorrow ; and this was heightened by the reflection, that they should see the Gentiles, whom they had always despised, enjoying in this kingdom the fellowship of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the view taken of this subject by Dr. Whitby, whose authority in this case will not be impaired by the suspicion, that he was biased by his creed in the interpretation. ‘To lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, doth not signify to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven with them, but to become the sons of Abraham through faith, (Gal. iii. 7,) and so to be blessed with him, (ver. 9,) to have the blessing of Abraham coming on them, that they may receive the promise of the Spirit, (ver. 14,) through faith in Christ to be the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise, (ver. 29,) viz : the promise made to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 3,) renewed to Isaac, (Gen. xxvi. 4,) and confirmed to Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 14,) and to be, according to Isaac, the children of promise, (Gal. iv. 28.) This, says Christ, shall be the blessing of

the believing Gentiles ; they shall be sons of Abraham, and heirs of the promises made to the patriarchs, and mentioned by all the holy prophets of the Old Testament, whereas, the unbelieving Jews, wanting the faith of Abraham, shall be deprived of the blessings promised to his seed ; for they who seek to enter, and shall not be able, because the Master has shut to his door, (Luke xiii. 24, 25,) are those Jews who sought for righteousness by the works of the law, and not by faith, and therefore found it not, (Rom. ix. 31, 32, vi. 7,) who entered not into the rest prepared for them, by reason of their unbelief, (Heb. iii. 18, 19, iv. 2, 5, 8,) from whom the kingdom of God was taken away, (Matt. xxi. 43,) they are they who shall say to Christ, " We have eaten and drunk before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets," (Luke xiii. 26,) which could be said only by the Jews.*

Various figures were employed by the Saviour, to represent the Jews as excluded from the blessings of the Gospel. They were said to be cast into *Gehenna*,—their last state was worse than the first—they were the tares that were bound in bundles and burned—the bad that were cast away when the net was drawn on shore—and those cast into outer darkness at the wedding feast.† All these figures were employed to represent them, as left in the darkness of ignorance, and suffering the most grievous punishments, while others entered into the kingdom of God, and had rest. The Bible does, however, teach us, that they shall at last all know God. Paul repeatedly declared this fact. '*All Israel shall be saved*,' (Rom. xi. 26.) 'All shall know me from the least to the greatest,' (Heb. viii. 11.) The parable under consideration had no reference to the eternal state of the Jews, their condition in immortality ; but described the great and leading feature in their history, which occupies so prominent a place in all the parables, their rejection and de-

* Com. and Annot. on Matt. viii. 11, 12.

† See particularly on this subject, the notes on the parables of the 'Marriage Feast,' and of the 'Ten Virgins.'

struction at the time Heaven gave them up, the victims of their own wickedness, and of the wrath of the Roman armies.

PARABLE OF THE SUPPER.

Luke xiv. 16—24.

'A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife: and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men who were bidden, shall taste of my supper.'

THIS parable may be considered under the following heads :—

1. What is signified by the '*great supper*.'
2. Who were those bidden to the supper?
3. Who were represented by 'the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind,' bidden afterwards to the supper?
4. In what sense was it true that none of those first bidden should taste of the supper?

The parable forms a part of a train of instructions, which seem to have been drawn from the Saviour, by a circumstance of trivial importance in itself. At the commencement of the chapter, we are informed, that Jesus 'went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, to eat

bread on the Sabbath day.' (Ver. 1.) After mixing with the guests, he perceived that some were engaged in seeking out the chief places, that they might hold an honorable station at the repast. He, on another occasion, described the Pharisees, as 'loving the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.' (Matt. xxiii. 6.) This circumstance led him to give the following judicious advice. 'When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' (Vers. 8—11.) From the Pharisees who were engaged in choosing the chief places, Jesus turned to the man into whose house he had entered, and who had invited the distinguished men, viz. the 'lawyers and Pharisees,' of whom the company was composed. 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper,' said he, addressing this man, 'call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' (Vers. 12—14.) At this one of the guests seems incidentally to have remarked, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' (Ver. 15.) The observation tended immediately to bring up to the mind of the Saviour, the blessed gospel of that kingdom, so often represented by the Jewish prophets under the figures of bread, and of a feast; and of which the Jews had been invited to partake, both by Christ himself, and his apostles. This gospel he set forth in the parable before us under the figure of a *great supper*.

Before we proceed to a direct consideration of the parable, it will be proper for us to attend to a certain part of the context, which, in common with many other passages of the sacred writings, has, as we conceive, been grossly misapplied. We refer to the saying of Jesus when he directed men to call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, when they made a feast, instead of their rich neighbours. To induce them to comply with this advice, he assured them, that they should be blessed in so doing; for although the poor could not recompense them, they should be ‘recompensed at the resurrection of the just.’ (Ver. 14.) From this it has been supposed, that Jesus meant to teach the doctrine of recompense *in the future immortal state* for the actions of this life. Before we yield implicit credence to such an application of these words, let us inquire what real evidence they afford of the doctrine they are supposed to substantiate. Well, then, it is said, ‘Thou shalt be recompensed at the RESURRECTION of the just.’ (Ver. 14.) And does not this mean, says the inquirer, that they shall be recompensed in what is commonly called the future life? We answer, the words prove no such thing. If that notion be correct, it is not proved by these words. All the dependence of those who take the common view, is placed on the word ‘resurrection.’ If that word had not occurred, no person would have thought of the usual application. For instance, suppose it had been said, thou shalt be recompensed at the *deliverance* of the just, would any person, from that circumstance, have inferred the fact of a recompense *in the future state*? No, surely. It is plain, then, that the sole stress is laid on the word *resurrection*; and the recompense is referred to the future state, because it is said, it will be given at the *resurrection* of the just. Now, in order to make it certain, that the words in question substantiate absolutely the doctrine of recompense in the future state for the conduct of men here on earth, it should be made to appear *indisputable*, that the Greek word *αναστάσις*, here rendered *resurrection*, signifies in this instance, the bringing up of the body from the grave, or the quickening of man into life after his nat-

ural death. But is it *indisputable* that this is the signification of the word, in the instance before us? It is not—it is very far from being so. In substantiating what we here say, we do not mean to furnish the reader with any other than acknowledged authority.

The Greek word *αναστασις*, generally translated *resurrection*, is derived from the verb *ανιστημι*, which signifies to *rise*, as from the ground, to arouse, to excite, to awake from sleep, to raise or erect buildings, to rise from a seat, from inaction, &c.* *Anastasis* has two shades of signification 1st. ‘A standing on the feet again, or *rising*, as opposed to *falling*.’ 2d. ‘A rising or resurrection of the body from the grave.’† Thus, then, the word *αναστασις* has two meanings, or rather applications: *Rising*, in opposition to *falling*, and *rising*, that is from the dead. Now, it is a question of the highest importance, in regard to the passage under consideration, in which of these senses the word *resurrection* occurs? And as we have shown, that this word does not necessarily signify restoration to life after natural death, it is clear that the passage, of itself alone, furnishes no proof whatsoever of the doctrine of recompense in the future state of existence for the actions of this life.

Dr. Campbell, one of the most judicious critics that ever lived, says ‘The word *αναστασις*, or rather the phrase *αναστασις των νεκρων*, is indeed the common term, by which the resurrection, properly so called, is denominated in the New Testament; yet this is neither the *only*, nor the *primitive* import of the word *αναστασις*. It denotes simply being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state, after an interruption. The verb *ανιστημι* has the like latitude of signification; and both words are used in this extent by the writers of the New Testament as well as by the LXX. Agreeably therefore to the original import, *rising* from a seat is properly termed *αναστασις*; so is *awaking* out of

* Donnegan’s Lex.

† See Parkhurst’s Greek and Eng. Lex.

sleep, or *promotion* from an inferior condition.* Here the Dr. assures us, that the common application of the word *αναστάσις*, in the New Testament, is not its *only* sense.† In regard to the words, ‘shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection* of the just,’ the argument in favor of recompense in the future state for the actions of this life, is founded upon them precisely as though that were its *only* sense. But the Dr. says, that it is so far from being the *only*, it is not the *primitive* sense of the word. ‘It denotes simply being raised from *inactivity* to action; or from *obscurity* to eminence, or a return to such a state after an interruption.’

There is no fact on which critics are more generally agreed, than in this matter touching the sense of *αναστάσις*. Rev. John Grove defines the word as follows: ‘*A standing up, rising, resurrection; an insurrection, commotion, tumult, uprising; an expulsion, a driving out, overthrow, devastation.*’‡ Dr. Jones gives this definition of the word: ‘*A rising up, the removal of a people from their abodes, devastation, the raising of a wall, resurrection of the dead, commotion, riot.*’§ In Pickering’s Schrevelius we find the following: ‘*The act of rising up as from a suppliant posture, from a seat, bed, &c.; emigration, expulsion from one’s dwelling-place, desolation; also, a building up, erection, as of a statue, &c.; the resurrection of the dead; N. Test.*’|| In the more recent lexicon of Donnegan, the definition corresponds with what we have already given: viz. ‘*The act of rising from a sitting or reclining posture, from a seat, or the ground; a rising up, a starting up from an ambush; a rising up from, viz. re-*

* See note on Matt. xxii. 23.

† The same writer says, in Dia. vi. p. ii. Sec. 23—‘Another mistake about the import of scriptural terms, is in the sense which has been given to the word ‘*αναστάσις*.’ They confine it by a use derived merely from modern European tongues to that renovation which we call the reunion of the soul and body, and which is to take place at the last day. I have shown in another place, that this is not always the sense of the term in the New Testament.

‡ Grove’s Lexicon, Boston, 1833.

§ Lexicon by John Jones, LL. D. London, 1825.

|| Cambridge, Mass. 1826.

covery from a state of weakness or sickness ; *in ecclesiastical writings*, Resurrection, insurrection, sedition, revolt. *act.* the act of raising up ; resuscitation, erection ; the erection, or re-edification of *walls*, expulsion *from a dwelling or country*, banishment, the subversion of the laws or constitution, overthrow, or destruction of a state, overthrow, destruction.*

To show that the criticisms now advanced are well founded, let us refer to the manner in which the word *αναστασις* is employed in the scriptures. It occurs most frequently in application to that renovation which is to take place after natural death. But we sometimes find it in its *primitive* sense, signifying a resurrection from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence. ‘The lips of those that *rose up* against me, and their device against me all the day.’ (Lamen. iii. 62.) Here the word in the Septuagint, which is rendered *rose up*, is the same which occurs in the passage under consideration—‘thou shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection* of the just :’ they cannot now recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed when they are raised from their low and oppressed condition. ‘Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I *rise up* to the prey.’ (Zeph. iii. 8.) Here the instance is precisely the same as in the last quoted passage. The following are the words of Simeon concerning Jesus Christ. ‘Behold, this child is set for the fall and *rising again* of many in Israel.’ (Luke ii. 34.) The same word occurs in this passage. And what resurrection is referred to? Not resurrection from death in the literal sense, but a resurrection from a depressed condition. There can be no question of this. And is not this the sense in which Jesus is called ‘the *resurrection* and the life?’ (John xi. 25.) ‘He that believeth in me,’ said Jesus, ‘though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ He shall be raised from a state of inactivity to action, from obscurity to eminence, from moral death to moral life.

* A New Greek and Eng. Lex. by James Donnegan, M. D. Boston, 1833.

By the help of these criticisms we arrive, we think, at the true sense of the words before us. Jesus was directing the people, when they made feasts, to be careful not to forget the poor: ‘Call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.’ He anticipates the objection of the Pharisees, who would say; But if I do this, how shall I be recompensed? He assures them they shall not lose their recompense; for, although the poor could not recompense them, yet when these poor were raised from their low and abject condition, then they should be recompensed. The meaning is plain. What Jesus spoke here is true as a general principle, besides, perhaps, being peculiarly applicable to the age in which he lived. The followers of Jesus then were poor, they were depressed. To encourage others to receive, and treat them with kindness, he frequently declared that they should not lose their reward. If they gave his disciples a cup of cold water, he would receive it as done unto himself. In Mark ix. 41—48, where Jesus is speaking of the distinction that was to be made between his followers, and his enemies, at the time of his coming to destroy the Jewish state, he says, ‘For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.’ At this time the Christians were to be *exalted*, raised from a low condition. Jesus bade them, when they saw the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem begin to come to pass, ‘then look up, and lift up your heads, for your *redemption* draweth nigh.’ (Luke xxi. 28.) This was ‘the *resurrection* of the just;’ and, at that time, those who had done them favors were to be recompensed. Unless this is the proper sense, we are unable to account for the reply, made by one of the guests to Jesus, when he uttered the words. As soon as he had said, ‘thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,’ this guest remarked—‘Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God’—an expression certainly that the Jews did not apply to a future state. At the time of the rescue of the church from her enemies, at the coming of Christ, the *kingdom of God* was to come with

power. (Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Luke ix. 26, 27.) This ‘resurrection of the just,’ was to take place, at the coming of Christ, when the kingdom of God came with power ; and hence, when Jesus spake of it, it called up to the mind of the guest, that kingdom of God. And that Jesus understood this guest, as speaking of his gospel kingdom, which was then to be fully established, is evident, because he immediately proceeded to speak of his gospel under the figure of a supper, and to describe the final rejection of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles; all which was accomplished at the time to which we have referred the passage. Dr. Whitby says, “‘Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God’”—It appears from the ensuing parable, that the kingdom of God here doth not signify the kingdom of heaven in the highest sense, but only the kingdom of the Messiah, of which the carnal Jew here speaks, according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should lord it over the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all temporal blessings and delight in which they placed their happiness.’* The same general sentiment is corroborated by Benson, who remarks, ‘When one of the guests then present cried aloud, “Happy shall he be that shall be admitted to feast in the kingdom of God,”’—to intimate that the Jews would *not esteem* this such a happiness, and that they were not so well prepared for the approaching kingdom of the Messiah as they pretended, he added the following parable.’† Dr. Campbell’s note on the phrase *kingdom of God* here, is equally plain. ‘The English translation makes to appearance the word *kingdom* here, refer solely to the future state of the saints in heaven. My version makes it relate to those who should be upon the earth in the reign of the Messiah. My reasons for preferring the latter are these: 1st. This way of speaking of the happiness of the Messiah’s administration, suits entirely the hopes and wishes

* Comment. on the passage.

† Life of Christ, p. 422.

which seem to have been long entertained by the nation concerning it. (See ch. x. 23, 24; Matt. xiii. 10, 11.) 2dly. The parable which, in answer to the remark, was spoken by our Lord, is, on all hands, understood to represent the Christian dispensation. 3dly. The obvious intention of that parable is to insinuate that, in consequence of the prejudices which, from notions of secular felicity and grandeur, the nation, in general, entertained on that subject; what, in prospect, they fancied so blessed a period, would, when present, be exceedingly neglected and despised; and, in this view, nothing could be more apposite; whereas there appears no appositeness in the parable on the other interpretation.* These authorities are sufficient to establish the fact, that by the kingdom of God the Jews understood the approaching kingdom of the Messiah upon the earth. The words of Christ concerning the *resurrection*, or *deliverance*, or *exaltation* of the just, called up the kingdom of the Messiah to the mind of the Jew, and do not seem to have directed his thoughts at all to the future state. The Jews believed, that when the kingdom of the Messiah should be established upon the earth, the nation should be delivered from their oppressors, and *exalted* to a state of glory and happiness beyond what they had ever before known. This would be to them an *avastasis*, a rising again, a deliverance, an exaltation; and to this circumstance might the Jew have supposed Christ to refer.

In addition to what is here said, it may be observed, that, if Jesus was speaking of the immortal resurrection of the dead, in the passage we are considering, he has used terms which he never used in any other instance, and which none of the apostles ever used, in speaking of the same subject. The immortal resurrection is not called the resurrection of *the just*, but the resurrection of *the dead*, and sometimes simply *the resurrection*. It is the resurrection, not of one class only, but of all men; for, 'As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be

* Note on Luke xiv. 15.

made alive.' (1 Cor. xv. 22.) Paul says, 'So also is the resurrection of *the dead* : it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.' (Vers. 42—44.) This surely treats of the future immortal resurrection of the dead ; it will not be disputed that it treats of the resurrection of all mankind ; it is equally certain that it treats of the resurrection of all into the same condition ; and Paul unequivocally declares that this condition shall be *incorruptible* and *glorious*. (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.) Furthermore, the same apostle adds, '*The dead*, (not *the just*) shall be raised incorruptible.' Death shall be swallowed up in victory. The sting of death shall be destroyed, the victory of the grave shall be taken away. How is it possible to admit the common construction put upon Luke xiv. 14, without contradicting what Paul has here stated ? And how shall we account for the fact that Jesus should use language concerning the future state in this instance, so different from that which he has used in other places, and which his apostles have used in reference to the same subject.* Here we close our remarks on the passage in question, and proceed to an explanation of the parable itself.

The parable of the Supper is very similar to that of the Marriage Feast, which we find in Matt. xxii. 2—10. In the one case the scene is laid at supper, in the other at a wedding. In both cases, those that were first bidden refused to attend, and went their way to engage in the secular pursuits of life. In both cases, also, after those who were first invited had refused attendance, the servants were sent into the high-places to gather together whomsoever they should find.† The punishment denounced on those

* Since the first edition of this work was published, we have seen two or three attempts to ridicule this interpretation ; but none seriously to refute it. If the arguments which we have advanced can be set aside, let it be done.

† It is not common now to make suppers for such promiscuous multitudes : but it was nothing unusual among the hospitable nations of

who were first invited and refused, was, in the one case, that they should not taste of the supper ; in the other, that they should be destroyed by the armies of the king, who were to ‘burn up their city.’

1. What is signified by the ‘great supper?’ There will be but little question, we think, that by the *great supper* is represented the gospel. There is no figure of more frequent occurrence in the Scriptures than that of food, to represent the gospel. Isaiah describes it as ‘a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees well refined.’ (xxv. 6.) So in the language of earnest entreaty and expostulation, the same prophet says, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without morfey and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.’ (lv. 1, 2.) Jesus pursues the same figure when he says, ‘For the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.’ His disciples say to him, ‘Lord, evermore give us this *bread*. And Jesus said unto them, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE : he that cometh to me shall never thirst.’ (John vi. 33—35.) Again says Jesus, ‘I am that *bread* of life ;’ (48.) ‘I am the living *bread* which came down from heaven ;’ (51.) When he came to explain the figure, and show what he meant by saying that he was the bread of life, and by urging mankind to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he said, ‘The flesh profiteth nothing ;’ that is to say, meat, literally speaking, profiteth nothing, in a moral point of view; I am not to be understood in the literal sense ; I am setting forth the virtue of my *doctrine* under these similitudes: ‘THE WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life :’ it is from my *gospel*, after all, that you are to derive the spiritual life of which I have been speaking,

the East. For more in regard to the hospitality of the ancient Jews, see the notes on the parable of the Two Debtors, and on the parable of the Marriage Feast.

(ver 63.) From these observations we think it will appear, that it was a custom, with the Saviour, to represent his gospel under the similitude of food, which was the life of the body, as the words of Christ were the life of the soul. ‘Under the image of an invitation to a feast,’ says Kenrick on Matt. xxii. 2, ‘Christ represents the offer of the gospel to the Jews. This contained the choicest blessings God had to bestow, and might be fitly compared to the dainties of a feast upon the most joyful occasion ; the marriage of a son.’

2. Who were those first bidden to the supper ? They were, unquestionably, the Jews. It was the appointment of Heaven, that this nation, first of all, should be invited to receive the gospel of the Son of God. When the twelve were sent forth to preach the kingdom of heaven, Jesus explicitly directed them to go not into the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into any city of the Samaritans ; but ‘go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ (Matt. x. 5, 6.) This is a direct confirmation of the application we have made of the parable before us. The Jews were first bidden to the gospel feast. ‘I am not sent,’ said Christ, ‘but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ (Matt. xv. 24.) The command to preach the gospel to the other nations, Jesus did not give until after his resurrection. (Mark xvi. 15.) Paul said to his brethren, the Jews, on a certain occasion, when they bitterly opposed the doctrines he taught, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.’ (Acts xiii. 46, 47.) The same eminent apostle, after having addressed his countrymen whom he found in the city of Rome, and perceived that they made light of his instructions, spake plainly to them as follows : ‘Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.’ (Acts xxviii. 28.) That the Jews

made light of the invitations of the gospel, is indisputable; and that for the most frivolous reasons and pretences they excused themselves from attending to the instructions of Christ and his apostles, is equally evident. One had bought a piece of ground, another five yoke of oxen, and a third had married a wife—these are their excuses as represented in the parable.

3. Who were represented by ‘the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind,’ bidden afterwards to the supper? We answer, the Gentile nations. They were universally regarded as poor, and desppicable by the Jews. In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Gentiles are represented by a beggar, full of sores, who fed on the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. (Luke xvi. 20, 21.) The Gentiles, in a moral point of view, were truly poor. They were ‘without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.’ (Ephes. ii. 12.) It cannot be disputed, that the Gentiles were invited to receive the gospel on its being rejected by the Jews. This fact we have already proved. (See Acts xiii. 46, 47.) Peter was one of the servants sent out into the streets and highways to invite the Gentiles to the ‘great supper’ of the gospel. He at first was unprepared to go; but by the vision of the vessel let down from heaven, God instructed him to call no man common nor unclean, and that to the Gentiles was granted repentance unto life. He went through all places, inviting the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind, to accept the gospel of Christ. Paul also preached the gospel to the Gentiles. So far as it was possible for one man to do it, he went through ‘all the world, preaching the gospel to every creature.’ In the language of the parable, he went into the streets and lanes of cities, and the highways and hedges of the country. At Athens he disputed in the market place daily with them that met him. This work of inviting the Gentiles to embrace the gospel, is not yet done. The heralds of the cross are still inviting mankind to receive the bread of everlasting life, to eat that which is good, and to let their souls delight

themselves in fatness ; and these means, we are assured, will continue to be exercised, ‘until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.’ (Rom. xi. 25.) But,

4. In what sense was it true, that none of those who were first bidden should partake of the supper ? We have here arrived at a point of our inquiries, that will be regarded, probably, with particular interest. Those who believe in endless misery, have long used this circumstance under consideration, to prove that some of the human race will finally be cast out from the favor of God, and not be permitted to taste the blessings of his love, forever and ever. A sentiment so dishonorary to the character of God, and fatal to the hopes and happiness of men, should not be received on slight evidence. Let us examine then, the evidence which the parable before us is supposed to furnish of the truth of that doctrine. Those who were first bidden to the supper, and refused attention to the request, and of whom it is said, ‘none of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper,’ must be lost forever, according to the usual application of the parable. But did Jesus mean to teach any such doctrine ? Did he, who said, ‘I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,’ mean to teach that those ‘lost sheep’ never would be restored ? We think not. Did he mean to teach, that the Jews who were first bidden to the supper of the gospel, must be lost and miserable forever ? It does not seem reasonable to us. Indeed, we know that cannot have been his meaning. If we never should succeed in ascertaining positively what was the meaning of our Saviour, we do know *positively* what it was not : he did *not* mean to declare the *endless misery* of the Jewish nation, nor of any part of that nation. Is it reasonable that the dear Saviour who said, ‘If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me,’ (John xii. 32) ‘all that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ;’ (John vi. 37.) Is it reasonable that he meant to be understood as teaching the eternal exclusion of the Jews from his gospel kingdom ? Was it not the covenant of God in relation to these very people, ‘I will put my

laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST ?' (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; Heb. viii. 10, 11.) To know God is eternal life ; (John xvii. 3.) And if they are all to know him without exception, 'from the least to the greatest'—will any be eternally excluded from the blessings of the gospel ? If the opinion of the apostle Paul is to be relied on in this case, that question must be answered in the negative. In his epistle to the Romans, this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, pursues a luminous course of argument, to prove the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. Drawing towards the close of that subject he says, 'For I would not brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED.' (Rom. xi. 26.) This appears to settle the question. Here it is said in regard to those people who were first invited to the supper, and did not come, and of whom it was declared 'none of those men shall taste of my supper' —that they shall 'all be saved.' We say the question is settled,—Jesus did not mean to teach that the Jews would finally be lost.

The sense of the parable before us is, in our opinion, clear. Those who were bidden to the supper and refused, did not taste of it, not one of them—they were cast into outer darkness, where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. Blindness happened to them; they had eyes but they saw not. They were sunk in the darkness of unbelief; but God had concluded them in unbelief only that 'he might have mercy upon all.' (Rom. xi. 32.)

Here we see, then, that the gospel which Jesus preached by himself and with his apostles, and more particularly the opportunity he furnished men of embracing the gospel when he labored personally on earth, preaching and working miracles in his Father's name, is compared to the sup-

per.* The servants of God first invited the Jews to the feast. They refused, missed the first opportunity and were miserably destroyed—yet they shall eventually be saved, even from the least unto the greatest of them. The servants of God next went into the highways, and invited the poor Gentiles ; they no longer confined themselves to Judea, but went through all the world, preaching the gospel. So it was ordained in the order of Providence, the Gentiles were first to be converted, and afterward the Jews. Thus Paul saith to the Gentiles, ‘For as ye [Gentiles] in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these [Jews] also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.’ (Rom. xi. 30—32.)

* This parable, and that of the ‘Marriage Feast,’ Matt. xxii. 2—13. are so plainly applicable to the same subject, that the true interpretation of one, must, in its general features, be the true interpretation of the other. See the Notes on that parable.

PARABLES OF COUNTING THE COST.

Luke xiv. 28—30.

‘For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it. Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.’

Verses 31, 32.

‘Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.’

We have often had occasion to notice in this volume, that many of the injunctions and precepts of our Lord, as well as his parables, sprung out of the occasion, and had reference to present objects and circumstances. The parables now before us, are an instance of the truth of this remark, and a proof of the readiness with which he conceived his beautiful images.

After Jesus had spoken the parable of the Supper, we are informed, ‘there went great multitudes with him,’ (ver. 25,) who had probably been attracted by his preaching, and the report of his wonderful works, and who, therefore, manifested some disposition to become his disciples. He said unto them, ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple,’ (ver. 26.) ‘And whosoever doth not bear *his cross*, and come after me, cannot be my disciple,’ (ver. 27.) These were the terms of discipleship in the primitive age; but they have been grossly misunderstood, by a perversion of the idioms which are found in the passage. Jesus did not intend that a man

should actually *hate* his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and himself also—this would have been impossible, for the apostle says, ‘no man ever yet hated his own flesh,’ (Eph. v. 29.) To hate, in this instance, signifies merely to love in a less degree; and hence, in a similar passage, we read, ‘He that loveth father or mother *more than me*, and he that loveth son or daughter *more than me*, is not worthy of me.’ (Matt. x. 37.) When it is said, (Rom. ix. 13,) ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,’ the meaning evidently is, I have loved Jacob more than Esau; and that this is no arbitrary interpretation of the word *hate*, but one agreeable to the Hebrew idiom, is evident from Gen. xxix. 30, 31, where we read, ‘He loved also Rachel *more* than Leah; and when the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*, &c.’ Here it is evident, hatred signifies a less degree of love. (See also Deut. xxi. 15—17.) Something resembling what Jesus here teaches, is said by Philo concerning the duty of the Jewish high priest; that he was to *estrangle himself from all his relations, and not, out of love to his parents, his children, or brethren, to omit any part of his duty, or act in any thing contrary to it.** Crucifixion was one of the most infamous, as well as cruel punishments, inflicted by the Romans and Jews. Hence the *cross* came to be used metaphorically for all kinds of evils: to bear the cross, therefore, and come after Christ, is to expose ourselves with fortitude to the greatest evils in his cause. †

‘The expression *taking up*, or *bearing the cross*, alluded to the custom usual in public executions of that kind, of making the victim carry to the fatal spot, the cross on which he was then to be extended; and by means of this allusion, Christ forewarned his friends, not of some disagreeable feelings which they would experience in his service, but of their manifest exposure to a horrible death, by becoming known as his disciples. Such were the circumstances of those times, that it was necessary that —

* See Bp. Pearce on Luke xiv. 26.

† Kenrick, Expos. on the passage.

they should absolutely put their lives in continual jeopardy. And they were, of course, to regard themselves as on the way to crucifixion ; or, to express it by a parallel phrase adapted to a modern usage, they were to go as *with halters around their necks.** Such was the danger of embracing Christianity in the primitive age of the church ; and well was it said, that a man was not qualified to be a disciple of Christ, unless he loved Christ and his religion better than himself, or wife, or children, or parents, or brothers, or sisters, or any thing this world can afford.

After having laid down these conditions of discipleship, Jesus proceeds to illustrate the necessity, that those who intended to become his followers, should estimate the pains, privations and dangers to which it would expose them, that they might enter into his kingdom fully aware of these evils; lest they should grow faint and weary, and be at last persuaded to abandon him. For this purpose he spoke the two parables, now before us. The man who professed Christ, with a full apprehension of the opposition it would call down upon him, was like a person, who, intending to build a tower, sat down first, and counted the cost, whether he had sufficient to finish it; while those who professed him, without a calculation of these circumstances, were like the man who went heedlessly on, and, after he had laid the foundation, was not able to finish the tower, and whom others mocked, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' So, to apply the other parable, the man who professed Christ without weighing all the consequences, was like the king who went to war with another king, sitting not down first and consulting, whether he was able with ten thousand men to meet him that came against him with twenty thousand, who, while the other was yet a great way off, sent an ambassage, and desired conditions of peace. Bp. Pearce says, 'This parable represents the absurdity of those who undertook to be disciples of Jesus, without considering what difficulties they were to meet with, and what strength they had

* Univer. Expos. i. 237, 238.

to enable them to go through with the undertaking.'* Whitby is to the same purport. 'Christ by these resemblances, adviseth us, before we enter on this Christian life, seriously to consider of and weigh these things, to form within us the most stedfast resolutions to perform the one, and arm ourselves with fortitude and patience against the other, that so we may not afterwards be moved by them to depart from it.' †

No one can fail to notice the frankness and honesty of Jesus, in pointing out to those who proposed to become his disciples, the privations, difficulties and dangers with which they must inevitably meet. In this particular he always dealt fairly and openly with mankind. He did not promise them worldly ease, riches or honors : but, on the other hand, pain, poverty, disgrace and death. He plainly forewarned them that their lives must be a secondary consideration in his service, and that, under all these disadvantages, their love to the cause of truth must be greater than their love to any thing else on earth.

And even, when he saw people, 'great multitudes,' following him, with the intent to become his disciples, he checked them, and pointed out the sacrifices they would be compelled to make ; and by the help of two interesting parables, the application of which they saw full well, he showed them, if they professed his name without a full apprehension of the consequences, they would finally abandon him, and become the sport and derision of mankind. Every thing here convinces us that Jesus was not an impostor—that he was not disposed to deceive mankind—that he never excited false hopes and illusive expectations. How many pretended reformers and false prophets have deceived their followers with hopes of gain which they never realized, and of happiness they never experienced. But, on the other hand, the Saviour told his followers, they should not lose their reward for their devotion to the cause of truth. The consolation of truth upon their hearts, and the approbation of their consciences, were a

* Com. on ver. 28.

† Com. on ver. 28.

recompence which the world could neither give nor take away. In that unbelieving age, these internal joys were the only rewards they would possess, amid the rage and persecution of their enemies ; but, in a short time, their enemies were to be overthrown, and then they should be delivered from persecution, and enjoy peace.

The attentive observer will not fail to remark, moreover, that Jesus would not recommend to his followers, what he had neglected himself. Did he tell them to forsake all earthly considerations for the cause of truth ? He had done the same. Did he tell them to bear their cross and follow him ? He was willing to bear the cross. He surrendered his life, an offering for the benefit of mankind. Did he tell them to make all necessary calculations on the difficulties and dangers to be met ? He had done the same. He knew the power of the enemy, the cost and sacrifices necessary to vanquish him ; and with a full understanding of all means of opposition to him, he entered on the work of saving mankind. Before he began, ‘he sat down and counted the cost.’ He never will send the adversary proposals of peace. He will accomplish the work he came to do. This work, as every Christian will acknowledge, is the salvation of mankind. He came to seek and to save that which was lost ; and if all mankind were lost, he came to save them all. It is the will of God that all men shall be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth ; (1 Tim. ii. 4;) and this *will* Jesus came to perform. ‘Lo I come to do thy will, O God.’ (Heb. x. 7.) Did Jesus here commence a work which he will not perform ? Has he laid the foundation, and yet will he not be able to finish it. If so, he is obnoxious to his own reproofs ; and, therefore, doubly worthy the derision of mankind. But he *will* perform the work he came to do. ‘The pleasure of the Lord *shall prosper* in his hand. He *shall* see of the travail of his soul, and *shall be satisfied.*’ (Isa. liii. 10, 11.)

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP.

Luke xv. 4—6.

'What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.'

THE manner of rearing sheep was so different with the Jews from what it is with us, that we shall hardly be able to understand some parts of the New Testament, or at least see their full force and beauty, unless we make ourselves acquainted with their habits in this respect. With them, we should suppose, it would be much more common to *lose* a sheep, than with us, who keep them in pastures securely fenced. It is not usual with us to pasture sheep 'in the wilderness ;' and a person unacquainted with the pastoral occupations of the Jews, would find it difficult to understand why the 'ninety and nine were left in the wilderness.' The Jewish flocks were not fixed in any part of the country ; they were led by the shepherd from place to place, from mountain to valley, from country to country, to the north in the summer, to the south in the winter, and finally to any place where fine pastures and good water were to be attained. David refers to this custom when he says, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; he leadeth me beside the still waters.' (Psal. xxiii. 1, 2.) A certain writer says, 'The flocks were tended by the servants, also by the sons, and frequently by the daughters, of the owner, who himself was often employed in the same service. In the summer they generally moved towards the north, [the family carrying their tent with them] or occu-

pied the loftier part of the mountains; in the winter they returned to the south, or sought a favorable retreat in the vallies. A shepherd was exposed to all the changes of the season, as the flock required to be watched by day and by night, under the open sky. Thus Jacob described his service, ‘In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.’ (See Gen. xxxi. 38—40.) So also the shepherds were watching their flocks by night, when the angel of the Lord came down with the glad tidings of a Saviour’s birth. (Luke ii. 8, 9.) The flocks did not however give so much trouble as we might imagine such vast numbers would. They grew familiar with the rules of order, and learned to conform themselves to the wishes of their keeper on the slightest notice. They became acquainted with his voice, and when called by its sound, immediately gathered round him. It was even common to give every individual of the flock its own particular name, to which it learned to attend, as horses and dogs are accustomed to do among us. If the keeper’s voice was at any time not heeded, or could not reach some straggling party, he had but to tell his dog, who was almost wise enough to manage a flock by himself, and immediately he was seen bounding over the distance, and rapidly restoring all to obedience and order. When he wanted to move from one place to another, he called them all together and marched before them with his staff in his hand and his dog by his side, like a general at the head of his army. Such is the beautiful discipline which is still often seen in the flocks of the eastern shepherds. With a knowledge of these circumstances, we can better understand the language of our Saviour, in his beautiful parable of the shepherd and his flock. The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.* (John x. 3—5.) Maillet, a learned

* Nevin’s Biblical Antiquities.

Frenchman, who was sixteen years Consul General in Egypt, describes the wandering habits of the Arabian shepherds, called Bedouins. ‘There is not a more pleasing sight in the world, than the beholding, in the months of November, December and January, those vast meadows, where the grass, almost as high as a man, is so thick that a bullock laid in it has enough without rising, within his reach, to feed on for a whole day, all covered with habitations and tents, with people and herds.

And, indeed, it is at this time of the year, that the Bedouins flock into Egypt, from three or four hundred leagues’ distance, in order to feed their camels and horses there. The tribute which they require of them for granting this permission, they pay with the produce of some manufactures of their wool, or with some sheep, which they sell, as well as their lambs, or some young camels, which they dispose of. As to what remains, accustomed, as they are, to extreme frugality, they live on a little, and a very small matter is sufficient for their support. After having spent a certain space of time in the neighborhood of the Nile, they retire into the *deserts*, whence, by routes with which they are acquainted, they pass into other regions, to dwell there in like manner, some months of the year, till the return of the usual season calls them back to Egypt.*

One extract further on this point, from a very recent writer, and we have done. He was passing through the country of the Kurds, in Armenia. ‘Though no Nomadic † tents appeared, we passed several shepherds, probably from the neighboring villages, carrying in their bosoms the lambs of the flocks they tended. The same scene had already frequently interested us, by presenting the source of the beautiful imagery of the prophet, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom.”(Isa. xl.11.) It is exhibited only at this season of the year ; when lambs are brought

* Maillet’s Letters, i. pp. 24, 25, as quoted by Harmer.

† The Nomades were wandering shepherds.

forth during the day, at a distance from the fold. The new-comers being too weak to follow the flock in its rovings after grass, are carried in the bosom of the shepherd, and not unfrequently they multiply so as to fill his arms before night. They are then taken to the fold, and guarded there, until sufficiently strong to ramble with their dams. One of these enclosures, when the sheep return anxiously bleating in the evening, from their day's pasture, and scores of hungry young ones are conducted by shepherds' boys, each to its own mother, presents an amusing scene.

'Throughout Armenia, neither sheep nor larger cattle, not only of professed shepherds, but of the common villagers, both Christians and Moslems, are ever pastured without a keeper constantly to watch them ; and invariably are they driven home, or to some enclosure, at night. The necessity of such precautions arises not so much from the fact that there are no fences in the country, as from danger of thieves and wild beasts. The man who should send his cows or his sheep to pasture alone, would have every reason to fear their being stolen before night ; and to allow them to sleep out, would be making them an almost sure prey to ravenous animals.*'

We have been thus particular in describing the method of rearing and tending flocks in the East, because frequent allusions are made both to the flock and to the shepherd, in the Scriptures ; and it will enable the reader also to understand, more clearly, the parable before us. It was not uncommon for a man to have *an hundred*, and even five times that number, of sheep. In travelling from place to place, over mountains and through wildernesses, it would not be strange that one should stray from the flock ; when the kind shepherd, leaving the remainder in the wilderness, in the care of the faithful dog, or some member of the family, should seek the lost one until found, and then bear back upon his shoulders to its companions, the weary, affrighted wanderer.

* Researches of Smith and Dwight in Armenia, in 1830, vol. ii. 282, 283. Also, i. 287.

God is called our shepherd, from his kindness and care of men. (Psal. xxiii. 1 ; lxxx. 1; Isa. xl. 11.) For the same reasons, particularly for his supervision of our spiritual interests, Jesus is called ‘that great shepherd of the sheep,’ (Heb. xiii. 20;) the ‘chief shepherd,’ (1 Pet. v. 4;) and ‘the shepherd and bishop of our souls,’ (ii. 25.) For like reasons the office of a teacher of the gospel, is that of a *pastor*, or *shepherd*. (Jer. iii. 15; Eph. iv. 11.) People without teachers, or, what is equally bad, with those who are unfaithful, are compared to sheep without a shepherd, faint, scattered, and a prey to wild beasts, (1 Kings xxii. 17; Ezek. xxxiv. 8; Matt. ix. 36.) The patience with which Christ and his followers suffered persecution, is like that of the sheep dumb before his shearers, (Isa. liii. 7.) And when Jesus sent out his harmless apostles in the midst of a cruel and blood-thirsty race, he said, ‘I send you forth *as sheep* in the midst of *wolves*.’ (Matt. x. 16.)

The parable of the Lost Sheep, with the two that immediately succeed it, were called forth from the Saviour, by the conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. In the first verse of this chapter we are informed, that ‘all the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him.’ This class of people felt an uncommon interest in his instructions. He was the friend of publicans and sinners; he ate and drank with them; his doctrine was adapted to their circumstances, and satisfied their wants; hence one of the evangelists has recorded, that ‘the *common people* heard him gladly.’ Mark xii. 37. The publicans were the collectors of customs, and other taxes, which were exacted of the Jewish nation by the Roman government. Because the Jews generally looked on this exaction as a burden, and a sign of bondage, they had a very bad opinion of these publicans, and associated with their characters every thing that was detestable; and it being more than probable that the greater part of them were Gentiles, to whom the Jews had a strong aversion, they regarded them as sinners, unworthy of the divine favor. When the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus to listen to his

instructions, as he did not forbid them, ‘The Scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them ;’ (ver. 2,) i. e. he condescends to the utmost familiarity with them. This was one of the principal objections which they had against Jesus Christ. (See Matt. ix. 11; Mark ii. 16; Luke v. 30, and xix. 7.) Now it was to answer this objection—to acknowledge the charge which the Pharisees brought against him, and justify his conduct in this particular, as well as to point out the self-righteousness, and unholy spirit of the Pharisees, that Jesus uttered the three parables recorded in Luke xv. Whitby agrees. ‘These parables, [viz. those in 15th of Luke,] and especially the last, are designed against the Scribes and Pharisees, who thought so abjectly of publicans and sinners, and so perversely of the whole Gentile world ; and to convince them of their inhumanity, and to show them that their deportment was very alien from God’s merciful inclination to them, and that they ought not to be unmerciful to them to whom God was so well inclined to show mercy, or deny their charity to them to whom he was so ready to afford it. For he spake this parable to them saying, Which of *you*?* Bp. Pearce also says, ‘This and the next parable mean to justify Jesus in applying himself to converse with sinners for the bringing them back to their duty.’†

‘What man of *you*,’ saith he, addressing himself to the Pharisees, ‘having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ?’ The argument with the Pharisees was this : ‘You think a sheep is sufficiently valuable, if it go astray, to be looked after by the owner—yes, he will leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he find it. When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shouldefs, rejoicing. And to share this joy with others, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

* Com. on Luke xv. 1, 2.

† Com. on Luke xv. 4.

Now, Pharisees, if a beast is thus valuable, of how much more value is man? ‘*How much then is a man better than a sheep?*’ (Matt. xii. 12.) And if you would make all this exertion to regain a stray sheep to your fold, how necessary is it that I should labor to bring mankind to the fold of God? This is the work I came into the world to do. And as the good shepherd would follow the lost sheep, and not hesitate to take it on his shoulders to bring it home, so I must not decline to receive sinners and eat with them.* They are the lost sheep whom I came to restore; and I seek them, and receive them, and condescend to associate with them, that I may win them to myself. And as you rejoice when the lost sheep is found, so “I say unto you that joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Here Jesus reproved the Pharisees with great severity. In their worldly mindedness, if they lost a thing of small value, they would use the utmost pains to obtain it again; but they were very thoughtless of the interests of their fellow-creatures, who they were willing should remain in darkness and sin, and with whom they could hold no connexion.

When Jesus spoke of just persons, who needed no repentance, he referred to the Pharisees; not indeed to acknowledge that they were really just and holy, and needed no repentance, but to speak of them according to their views of themselves, and to avail himself of those views to justify his conduct. That they thought themselves to be holy, is evident from the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, wherein the former thanked God that he was not like other men, (Luke xviii. 11.)

Dr. Lightfoot shows in his sermon on Luke xvi. 7, that ‘It was common with the nation of the Jews to distinguish *just men* into two sorts. 1st. Those that had been sinners, but had repented, and were become new men; these

* In the Assembly’s Annotations we read, ‘Christ, the good shepherd, came to seek that which was lost, and will never give over his work unperfected.’ On Luke xv. 4.

they acknowledged to be just men, in comparison of wicked men, and in comparison of what they had been before. But those that had not been sinners, and faulty and vicious men, but had led a fair course of life all their time, like that young man (Matt. xix.) "that had kept all the commandments from his youth;" these men they account good or holy men, and perfectly just men.* To this opinion Jesus seems to have referred in the words 'just persons that need no repentance;' and we find occasional references to the opinion in other parts of the Scriptures. Solomon intended, probably, to discountenance it when he said, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.' (Eccles. vii. 20.) Paul appears to refer to the same distinction in Rom. v. 7. 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet, peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.' Thus, on the supposition that their own doctrine was true, Jesus showed the Pharisees that there was more joy over one sinner that had repented, than over any number of persons who needed no repentance. If they thought themselves thus holy, as Jesus came to save sinners, there was no need, as they in that case must grant, that he should seek them and associate with them, any more than that they should seek a sheep which was not lost. On another occasion Jesus used a different figure, but not less striking. 'They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick,' which he explains by adding, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' (Mark ii. 17.) As there was no need that the physician should visit those who are in health, so there was no need that Jesus should visit the righteous; and if the Pharisees were *really* righteous, then he had not come to call them to repentance. This was spoken solely in reference to their views of themselves, and not to acknowledge them as possessing true righteousness, in which it is certain they were very deficient. (Matt. v. 20.) When Jesus said, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,† more than over

* Works, vii. 256; xii. 146.

† This passage is not very favorable to the doctrine, that the inhabit-

ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance,' (Luke xv. 7,) the object was merely to express, how desirable it was that sinners should be converted; and that such a circumstance was greater cause of joy, than though there had actually been ninety and nine just persons who needed not repentance. As the other parables in the chapter are precisely of the same character with this, and spoken for the same objects, we may pass to the consideration of them, without a more particular attention here.

PARABLE OF THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.

Luke xv. 8, 9.

'Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.'

THE principle of this parable is precisely the same with that last examined, and the object in stating it was the same, viz. to justify the conduct of Christ in associating with publicans and sinners, and to convince the Pharisees, that if truly they were not in a lost state, there was no need of his seeking them. The solicitude of the woman to find the lost piece of silver, shows the strong interest with which Jesus labored for the salvation of mankind; and as she did not abandon the search until she had found that which was lost, so we learn that he will not be satisfied, till all those for whom he died, shall have been bene-

ants of heaven will derive their principal joys from beholding the miseries of the damned. Beausobre and L'Enfant say, 'Plus de joie, cela est relatif au stile des Juifs, qui representoient les anges pleurant à cause de la corruption des hommes, et se rejoignant de leur conversion.'

fitted by his mission. As this piece of silver belonged to the woman, so all mankind belong to Christ: the Father loved him, and gave all things into his hands, (John iii. 35;) and as the silver was valuable in itself, which caused the owner to prize it, so are mankind valuable in the sight of their rightful owner. They are his ‘purchased possession;’ and he will finally gather them together in himself. (Eph. i. 10, 14.) The doctrine of total depravity, by which men have been represented as utterly vile and worthless, is not admissible under this view of the subject. Silver may become tarnished, but the nature of it is not changed, even when its external appearance is at the worst; there is always something intrinsically valuable; and Jesus would hardly have chosen this figure whereby to represent mankind in their lost state, had he entertained the same views which have been taken of human nature, by some of his followers. Mankind were precious in his sight; and ‘he is like a refiner’s fire, and as fuller’s soap; and he shall set as a *refiner* and *purifier* of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ (Mal. iii. 2, 3.)

PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv. 11—32.

A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.'

THIS is one of the most striking and beautiful parables in the Bible, not only for its simplicity and delicateness in

every part, but for its adaptation to the subject which it was designed to illustrate, and for the severity of the reproof which it administered to those who had murmured against Jesus, because he associated with publicans and sinners. Some parts of the parable will be better understood, and appear with more force, if we take notice of those customs on which they were founded.

The younger son required of his father the portion of goods that belonged to him, and the father readily bestowed them upon him. Adam Clarke has shown, that 'it has been an immemorial custom in the East for sons to demand and receive their portion of the inheritance during the father's life-time : and the parent, however aware of the dissipated inclinations of the child, could not legally refuse to comply with the application.'* The design of the law was to protect the child from ill-treatment on the part of the father ; but if it could be shown that the child had separated from the paternal mansion without just cause, he was subject to a heavy fine. The young man immediately departed unto a far country, and wasted his substance in riotous living. He began to be in want, and went and joined himself to a citizen in that country, who put him to the menial employment of feeding swine. No Jew could see greater degradation than this. Among people of that nation, it was regarded as a great defilement to eat swine's flesh ; it must, therefore, have been deemed more dishonorable and odious to be engaged in the employment of feeding these animals. He would fain have satisfied his hunger with the husks the swine ate. His extreme misery induced him to form the resolution to return to his father's house.

Mark the young man's reception. His follies and sins are forgotten ; he is not reviled, he is not reproached by the father ; but the utmost demonstrations of joy are made at his arrival. The father sees him a great way off ; and recognizing his long-lost son, he rushes out to meet him, and falls on his neck and kisses him. The son commen-

* Commentary on the place.

ces the penitential confession which he had previously resolved to make ; but the father interrupts him. The best robe is put upon him as a sign of honor. It was so regarded by the Jews. Thus the proud and ostentatious Scribes 'desired to walk in long robes,' (Luke xx. 46.) The martyrs, by way of honor, are said to have 'white robes given to every one of them,' (Rev. vi. 11.) And the redeemed are clad in the same manner, (vii. 9, 13, 14.) So when the Jews hailed Jesus in mockery as their king, they preserved the outward forms of honor, and put a crown of thorns, and a purple or scarlet robe upon him. (Matt. xxvii. 28, 31 ; Luke xxvii. 11 ; John xix. 2, 5.) The compliment of the ring also denoted that the person was received to favor and honor ; thus Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph's, (Gen. xli. 42,) and Ahasuerus plucked off his ring and bestowed it on Haman, (Esther iii. 10,) and afterwards on Mordecai, (viii. 2.) A feast was made to welcome the prodigal, and music and dancing were ordained. Some writers have stated that the ancient Jews seldom eat animal food, except upon extraordinary occasions ; and that a fatted calf was kept ready for slaughter when it should be needed. (Gen. xviii. 7.) The Jews used the calf in their burnt-offerings, and the heathen made it an object of worship, by whose example the Jews were contaminated. (Ex. xxxii. 4 ; Deut. ix. 16 ; Acts vii. 41.) A fatted calf was the richest viand that could be served. Music and dancing were signs of honor likewise, and still continue to be among the nations of the East. Baron De Tott describes a circumstance that took place during his journey between Aleppo and Alexandretta. Passing by a company of six or seven thousand Asiatics, they adopted the following method to show him respect : ' Several of the Turcomen advanced to meet us, and I soon had the musicians of the different hordes, playing and dancing before me all the time we were passing by the side of their camp.'* Thus, when Saul and David returned from the

* Memoirs, part iv. p. 132.

slaughter of the Philistine leader, ‘the women came out of all the cities of Israel, *singing* and *dancing*, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.’ (1 Sam. xviii. 6.)

Harmer observes, that ‘music universally attends the Eastern feasts.’ * On the contrary, in times of sorrow, all music was put aside. (Eccles. xii. 4; Lamen. v. 13, 14; Dan. vi. 18; Rev. xviii. 22.) We find the following passage in the travels of Major Rooke, which bears a strong likeness, so far as it goes, to the parable of the Prodigal. ‘Hadje Cassim, who is a Turk, and one of the richest merchants in Cairo, had interceded in my behalf with Ibrahim Bey, at the instance of his son, who had been on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and came from Juddah in the same ship with me. The father *in celebration of his son’s return, gave a most magnificent fete on the evening of the day* of my captivity, and as soon as I was released, sent to invite me to partake of it, and I accordingly went. His company was very numerous, consisting of three or four hundred Turks, who were all sitting on sofas and benches, smoking their long pipes ; the room in which they were assembled was a spacious and lofty hall, in the centre of which was a *band of music*, composed of five Turkish instruments and some vocal performers ; as there were no ladies in the assembly, you may suppose it was not the most lively party in the world ; but being new to me, was for that reason entertaining.’ †

The object of this parable was the same with that of the two last, with this addition—Jesus here introduced the character of the Pharisee, and under the figure of the elder son he exhibited it, stripped of all its deception. The circumstance that called forth the three parables in Luke xv. should not be forgotten. When the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus, to listen to his instructions, and he did not forbid them, the Scribes and Pharisees expressed their astonishment in the strongest terms, and *murmured*

* Obs. lxxviii.

† Travels in Arabia Felix, p. 104.

even that he should receive *sinners* and eat with them. In the parables of the Lost Sheep, and Lost Piece of Silver, as we have shown, Jesus illustrated the propriety of his conduct, and convinced the Pharisees that, if they were as righteous as they judged themselves, there was no reason why he should seek their society, as they stood not in need of any assistance from him. In the parable before us, by painting, in a masterly manner, the misery into which sin plunges mankind, he showed them that sinners were objects of pity, not of scorn; and, by contrasting the hatred and anger of the elder son with the joy felt by all the rest of the family at the prodigal's return, he developed in the clearest light, the misanthropic disposition of the Pharisees. The parable is carried along with great judgment, until the repentant son has mingled with the family, and music, feasting and dancing are put in requisition to denote the common joy. At this moment the elder son, who represented the Pharisees, is introduced. He draws nigh to the house; the music strikes his ear; he sees the inmates engaged in the lively dance. He calls one of the servants, and inquires what these things mean. The servant, as full of joy unquestionably as any other member of the household, and expecting to communicate the same joy to the inquirer, tells him that *his brother has returned*, and that his father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. Now mark the Pharisee. Is he pleased? Does he rush into the house, and seize his brother's hand, and bathe it in the tears of bliss that he finds himself unable to repress? No, far from this—*he is angry, and will not go in*. What is the matter? What excites his anger? Only this—the father hath seen fit to receive the sinner into favor. He thinks sinners ought to be cast off, and experience no mercy. His father appears. Let us see how he manages his case before his parent. He says, ‘Lo, these many years do I serve thee; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this *thy son* [not my brother] was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou

bast killed for him the fatted calf.' Here the self-righteousness of the Pharisee is conspicuous. In his own estimation he had never done anything wrong. This is his opinion of himself; but what is the fact? The fact is, he is now openly violating his father's commands, who requires him to love his neighbor as himself. But he *hates* his brother, and is angry because the father, more merciful than himself, has received him into favor. Why did he never think to complain before? Not a word of fault previously to this had ever fallen from his lips. The fact is, he never saw any reason to complain until *others were treated as well as himself*. So long as he enjoyed his father's bounty alone, and the prodigal was far away, suffering in sin, he felt contented and happy; but the moment the father shows the least kindness to the prodigal, then he is angry, and will not go in. This was the real disposition of the Pharisees. Why did they murmur against Christ? Because 'he received sinners and ate with them,' (ver. 2.) But let us examine the case of this elder son a little more closely. He says his father never gave him a kid that he should make merry with his friends. What! is this true? Did not his father divide his goods with the children? (ver. 12,) and did not the father say, 'Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine'? (ver. 31.) The father closes the scene by asserting the propriety of his conduct. 'It was *meet* that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.' If the Pharisees to whom these parables were originally delivered, had any sensibility whatsoever, they must have felt the force of the rebuke which was here so adroitly administered.

The parable before us furnishes many rich doctrinal reflections—it sets forth the conduct of God towards his erring children. Witness, first, the misery into which sin plunged the prodigal, and contrast it with the happiness of his father's house; then you will know what sufferings press upon the sinner, when compared with the peace and consolation of the virtuous heart. That doctrine, which we sometimes hear, that sinners often are happy in their

sins, while the righteous are afflicted and distressed; and that it will be necessary to establish retributions in the future world, in order to make up for these apparent imperfections of Divine Providence in this, will find no countenance in this parable. The sinner is represented as suffering exceedingly *in his sins*, and his sufferings induced his return to his father's house. 2d. As many contend that men have lost the image of God by their transgressions, it is proper to inquire, whether the prodigal lost the image of his father during his absence? No,—the father saw him a great way off, and knew him, and rushed out to meet him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The father saw his image in the child—it was not lost. 3d. We sometimes hear it said, that it was necessary for Christ to die, in order to make God compassionate, and open a way whereby he could be just, and forgive sinners. Does Jesus give any countenance to this doctrine, in the parable before us? What victim bled, to create compassion in the father's heart? None,—the father never was destitute of compassion. He loved his son before he went astray; he loved him while he was astray; and, when he saw him a great way off, he had compassion upon him, and demonstrated that compassion by the strongest evidences. 4th. It has been declared, frequently, that mankind, while in a state of sin, are not the children of God. This notion is certainly contradicted by the parable. The prodigal was *a son* while afar off, and he recollects that he had *a father*, and this recollection induced his return to his father's house. ‘I will arise, and go to MY FATHER.’ It was not necessary to threaten him with any greater misery, than that which he actually suffered, to create in him the resolution to return. It is not reasonable to suppose he would have returned at all, had he believed his father was his enemy, and that it would be necessary for his brother to die, in order to appease his father's wrath. 5th. The *conversion* of this prodigal was not a *change of nature*; it was merely a change of purpose, and inclination, and this not by any special agency of God's Spirit, but by the influence of the

circumstances by which he felt himself controlled. He was made wiser by experience: this wisdom induced a wiser course of conduct; and *such* was his conversion. These are some of the reflections which naturally occur in reading the parable.

We cannot fail to remark, that every thing in this parable is calculated to have an excellent influence on morals—every thing encourages virtue, and discountenances vice: and so we may say of our Lord's parables in general. On all occasions, wherever he was, whether speaking in figure, or without, the direct tendency of his instructions was to induce love to God and man—to foster tender emotions, pity, compassion, charity—to beget humility and meekness in the heart—and to discountenance pride, ostentation, hypocrisy, arrogance and hatred. In fine, on such a moral teacher as Jesus, the world will never look again. For his knowledge of the human heart, for his wisdom in difficult circumstances, for the simplicity and true sublimity of his parables; for his power to expose wickedness before the eyes of those who practised it, for the influence of his instructions, and above all of his life itself,—our Lord stands, and ever must stand unrivalled, throughout all the world. ‘We shall in vain,’ says Archbishop Newcome, ‘search the treasures of ancient and modern learning for apologetics equal in beauty to our Lord's parables in general, and particularly to the three in the 15th of Luke.’*

* *Observations*, p. 89.

PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Luke xvi. 1—8.

' And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for thou mayst be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, a hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, a hundred measures of wheat: And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write four-score. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.'

THIS parable is a part of the chain of parables, which extends from the beginning of the *fifteenth* to the end of the *sixteenth* chapter of Luke. These all seem to have been drawn from the Saviour by the objections brought against him by the Pharisees, viz. that he received sinners, and ate with them. The principal design of the parable of the Prodigal Son, was to show in how high an estimation the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, regarded themselves; and that from this vain conceit of their own abilities and righteousness, sprung up their hatred of the common people, and of the Gentile nations. The parable of the Unjust Steward was designed to correct this opinion, and to show them, that how much soever they thought of their own wisdom in religious things, they were not in fact so wise about those things, as people of the world generally are about temporal concerns.

A certain man had a steward, and he was accused unto him of wasting his goods. For this reason he was called

to render in an account of his stewardship, as he was about to be removed from his office. He had nothing to reply to the charge brought against him, and therefore considered what he should do for himself when he was discarded. ‘What shall I do?’ saith he, ‘for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.’ As he was not yet put out of office, he resolved to make use of the power with which he was entrusted to secure a retreat among his master’s tenants, when dismissed from his service. ‘I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they [his master’s tenants] may receive me into their houses.’ The plan he proposed, was to confer some essential advantages on the tenants, that he might thereby lay them under obligations to him, which from motives of gratitude, they would desire not to violate. The accounts he had kept for his master he still had in his possession, and he called on the debtors to bring in their accounts. He said unto the first, ‘How much owest thou unto my lord?’ The debtor replies, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ These tenants, it is probable, were to pay their rents, not in money, but in wheat and oil, and the other products of the land they hired.* The steward directed him to alter his account, or lease, perhaps, and say fifty. he said to another, ‘How much owest thou?’ He answered, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He directed him to take his bill, or account, and write fourscore. These certainly were no small favors that he showed the tenants, and might well dispose them to receive the steward afterwards into their houses. The parable closes with the observation, that ‘the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.’

Before we proceed to fix and illustrate the application of the parable, we wish to take notice of what we regard

Lightfoot says, ‘This seems to have relation to the custom of letting out grounds; which we find discoursed of, Demai, cap. 6, where it is supposed, a ground is let, by its owner, to some tenant upon this condition,—that he pay half, or one third or fourth part, of the products of the ground, according as it is agreed between them as to the proportion and quantity. So also, he supposes an olive yard, let out upon such kind of conditions.’ Works, xii. 150.

as a wrong interpretation of it, and clear the Saviour of a charge which has rashly been brought against him, of designing to countenance immorality. Some have inferred that God commended the conduct of the steward in defrauding his master, and recommended mankind to imitate him. But this is altogether an unjustifiable inference. In the first place, the lord who commanded the steward was his earthly master, the same spoken of in verses 3 and 5. Second, the idea kept up throughout the parable, is that the steward was actually *unjust*, and he is expressly said to be so, ver. 8. No attempt is made to hide or extenuate his fault. Third, this servant was not commended for his *injustice*, but for his prudence in making arrangements for his maintenance after he was dismissed from his master's employ. He is said to have done wisely, not in the particular of his injustice—such a construction would be truly absurd—but in the circumstance of his foresight, and his calculations in regard to the future. He took the future into consideration, and made preparation for it; and so far he was wise, and was commended; but not for his injustice. ‘The steward is called here unjust; and therefore is not commended for cheating his lord, but only for this one thing, that he had taken care to provide himself with friends against a day of distress.’ *

It is not probable that it was intended by the Saviour to represent the steward *dishonest* and *unjust* in directing his lord's debtors to make an alteration in their bills, for there is no evidence that he designed in this case to cheat his lord. He may have intended to supply the abatement in the debtors' bills from his own private stock. The parable surely will bear this interpretation. The principal fault charged against the steward, and in fact the only one, was that he *had wasted his master's goods*. Herein his injustice lay. After he had been detected in this, he acted a wise and prudent part for himself; and as he had enriched himself perhaps, by wasting his master's property, so he could do the debtors this kindness. This would give

* Bp. Pearce's Com. on the place.

the debtors more confidence in him, and make them more willing to receive him, than if they understood him to be directly and palpably dishonest. It was a custom in the East, (as we shall hereafter show) for a steward to appropriate a certain part of his master's profits to himself. He may have exceeded the proper bounds in this particular, and wasted his master's goods in this manner; and thus he may have made himself able to abate the accounts of the debtors without further injury to his master. Perhaps the following reflections from a judicious writer, will be instructive to the reader: 'It has been generally supposed, that when the steward is here represented as directing his lord's debtors to make an alteration in their bills, this was intended to denote a farther instance of fraud and knavery in his conduct. It is supposed to be a representation of him as entering into a combination with these debtors to bring in their accounts at so much less than they really were, to which he would take care that his own or his lord's should correspond; that by so laying such an obligation upon them, he might make an advantage of their future friendship. But it has been observed by a very able writer,* that there is no necessity for supposing this to be the meaning of the representation. And according to his own interpretation of it, the steward's calling these debtors together, and bidding them take their bills or writings and write down so much less than they really owed, was only assuring them that in their own books or papers they might consider themselves as owing so much less than they really did, and regulate their own accounts, and the valuation of their substance accordingly; for that he himself would, out of his own private stock, supply the rest. And though the lord of the steward is represented as calling him unjust after this action, and even whilst he is commanding him for the wisdom and sagacity of it, yet this, it is observed, may very easily be supposed to refer to his former injustice, and not to this particular part of his conduct. † If

* See Dr. Clarke's Sermons, Vol. iii. Ser. 13.

† Bulkley on the Parables.

this view be correct, and we must confess it has no small degree of probability, we see that the injustice of the steward consisted in his *wasting his lord's goods*, for which he was dismissed. His conduct after this was justifiable, and even commendable, ver. 8. That a steward was entitled, as his wages, to a certain per cent. of his master's profits, appears from various sources. See the following passage from Hill's Travels. ' It is a common custom with the merchants of this country, when they hire a broker, book-keeper, or other [confidential] servant, to agree that he shall claim no wages ; but, to make amends for that unprofitable disadvantage, they give them free and uncontrolled authority to *cheat* [too strong a term] them every way they can, in managing their business ; but with this proviso, that they must never exceed the privileged advantage of *ten per cent.* All under that, which they can fairly gain in settling off accounts with their respective masters, is *properly their own* ; and by their masters will be confirmed to their possession.' * This may appear singular to us, but it is a very ancient practice. It is provided for in the Gentoo Laws. ' If a man has hired any person to conduct a trade for him, and no agreement is made in regard to wages, in that case, the person hired shall receive one tenth of the profit.' ' If the person be hired to attend cattle, he shall receive *one tenth* of the milk. If the person be hired for agriculture, *one tenth* of the crop. If he plough the ground, receiving victuals, *one fifth* of the crop ; if he receive no victuals, *one third*.' † We are enabled by these passages, to come at a very probable conjecture concerning the steward in the parable. He had a right to appropriate to his own use, a portion—one *tenth*, or one *third*—of his lord's profits, consisting of oil and wheat. In making the abatement, he used, it may be, but his own part of the profits ; being jealous, if it was not done before he left the stewardship, that his lord would seize upon it as a remuneration for the

* Travels of Aaron Hill, p. 77.

† Halked's Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 140.

loss he had sustained in the wasting of his goods. Anticipating his immediate dismission, the steward was in haste to transfer his interest to the debtors, and said, ‘ Sit down quickly, and write fifty.’ When the property was in this way transferred to the debtors, it was out of the reach of the lord; and thus the steward had, with provident foresight, adopted the only means which presented for his future maintenance. Knowing he had no reason to expect what was really his own, if he had been remiss in his duty to his master, he made a prudent use of it before it was too late. To this Jesus seems to have referred when he said, ‘ If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?’ (Ver. 12.) It was this part of the steward’s conduct which was commended, viz. his prudence and foresight in guarding against approaching evils.

What now, we may inquire, was the object of Jesus in uttering this parable? Answer, To show the Scribes and Pharisees, whose character he had faithfully drawn in the parable of the Prodigal, that although they felt proud of their moral attainments, and were generally regarded as the ‘children of light,’ yet in fact they were not so wise and prudent as men generally are, in the management of their secular concerns. The unjust steward showed more wisdom in the provision he had made for the future, than they ever manifested. ‘The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.’ (Ver. 8.) They are here called the children of light for the same reason they are called the ‘children of the kingdom.’ (Matt. viii. 12.) The Saviour then adds, ‘ Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.’ (Ver. 9.) The phrase translated ‘mammon of unrighteousness,’ it is admitted on all hands would be better rendered, *uncertain riches*, such as the riches of this world are in comparison of the true riches of the gospel. Paul calls the gospel the ‘unsearchable riches of Christ,’ (Eph. iii. 8,) and he says in another place, ‘ Trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God.’ (1 Tim. vi. 17.)

Christ directed those who listened to him, to follow the example of the unjust steward. It would have been better for the steward, if he had done his duty faithfully, and retained his stewardship ; but when he found he must lose it, he did the next best thing he could. So Jesus proposed to those to whom he was speaking the steward's example. If they were determined not to do what they ought, then let them do the next best thing. If they would not embrace the gospel, then let them 'make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' or 'uncertain riches.' Let them avail themselves of the law of Moses, and make a good use of that, which was well represented by 'uncertain riches' when compared with the 'durable riches' of the gospel. And if they would make a wise and prudent use of the 'uncertain riches' of the law, and do as God and Moses commanded them in that institution, they would be received into *age-lasting tabernacles*, for this is certainly the better rendering of $\tauας αιωνιας στηνας$ —they would enjoy to the full all the comfort and shelter, if we may so speak, that the law could afford. This they never yet had done—they had made void the law of God by their traditions—and corrupted the institutions of Moses ; and the benefit their law otherwise would have conferred upon them, they had not enjoyed. This was the reason they did not receive the gospel, to which a right improvement of the law would naturally have led them. 'He that is faithful in that which is *least*, is faithful also in much.' (Ver. 10.) They had not been faithful in that which was least. 'If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon (uncertain riches) who will commit to your trust the true riches?' (Ver. 11.) If you have not been faithful in your use of the law, you cannot receive the true and durable riches of the gospel. 'If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?' (Ver. 12.) If you have resembled the unjust steward, who was unfaithful to his master, how can you expect to receive the gospel, which was specially designed for you, and proclaimed to you before any other people upon the face of all the earth?

It was their *pride* and *avarice* that prevented them from rendering due obedience to the law of Moses, as well as to the gospel of Jesus Christ ; and it was to this the Saviour referred, when he said, ‘ Ye cannot serve God and mammon.’ These two masters no man can serve, ‘ for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.’ (Ver. 13.) The Pharisees listened to these things with deep attention, and felt themselves severely rebuked by this reference to their covetous spirit ; and the consequence was that they derided Christ, (ver. 14.) To their hypocrisy, and disposition to justify themselves, Jesus refers in ver. 15, ‘ Ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts ; for that which is (sometimes) highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.’ As though he had said, Ye deceive men by your pretences, and your external show of godliness ; and by these means you gain their esteem ; but God looks on the heart ; him you cannot deceive ; and your pretended righteousness, which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God. From this Jesus turns immediately to the main theme of his discourse, viz. the *rejection of the gospel by the Jews*. He labors to show, that the time had come for men to abandon the law of Moses, and embrace the gospel, or, in other words, enter the kingdom of Jesus Christ. (See ver. 16.) ‘ The law and the prophets were until John ; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.’ The Pharisees still maintained their adhesion to the law ; but God designed that the law should not continue beyond the days of John, since which time the gospel was preached, and men eagerly embraced it. Not one jot or tittle of this law should fail, (ver. 17.) It was designed to be fulfilled, and done away ; and when the time arrived for its abrogation, it was easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than that it should longer remain. In ver. 18, we come to a striking, but short parable, in which Jesus sets forth the sin of those who still adhered to the law. ‘ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth

adultery : and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.' If the Jews had put away the law before the time for its abrogation had arrived, they would have been guilty of a sin, like that of the man who should put away his wife, and marry another ; but they committed the same offence by adhering to the law after the days of John, since which time the kingdom of God was preached ; for they were like the man who married her that was put away by her husband ;* They remained attached to a dispensation which God had determined should come to an end, and this too, notwithstanding they had been urged to receive the gospel, both by Jesus and his apostles. Their glory, however, was about to depart. The poor Gentiles, whom they had despised, were to be received into the kingdom of the gospel, and they were to be cast into outer darkness. This great change in their circumstances, as well as the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, are beautifully figured in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, to which the attention of the reader will, in the next place, be directed.

* See Rev. Hosea Ballou's Sermon on the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Select Sermons, No. iii. p. 37.

**PARABLE OF THE
RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.**

Luke xvi. 19—31.

‘There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: For I have five brethren: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’

THE imagery of this parable is borrowed from the opinions of the heathen concerning *hades*, or the invisible world, the state of the dead,—which the Jews, in the time of the Saviour’s ministry, had in part imbibed. In its character as a parable, this differs from none other in the New Testament, except in the fact now named, viz. that the imagery is principally drawn, not from the things of this world, but from the fabled regions of Tartarus and Elysium. It is the case in all parables, that the object is not to magnify and set up the circumstance which makes

the *image* or *similitude*; but, by the use of that, to illustrate and establish some important fact or doctrine. A parable, therefore, may be fitly compared to a nut, of which the *shell* represents the image of the parable, and the *meat* the fact or doctrine to be inculcated; as the shell protects the meat and assists to bring it to perfection, so the image illustrates and develops the doctrine. Hence, a person who should receive the literal sense of the imagery, as the final object aimed at in the parable, would be like the man who should retain the shell of the nut, and cast the meat away. If we succeed in proving that the account of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable, it should then be regarded as settled that the *literal sense*, whatever it may be, is not to be received as the doctrine intended to be established by the Saviour; and we shall be led by the context, and by the analogy of the New Testament, as we trust, to the facts which were set forth under the figure.

We propose, in the course of this examination, to show,—

I. That allowing the passage to be a *literal account*, and not a *parable*, it fails altogether of substantiating either the doctrines of election and reprobation, as they have been commonly held, or the presumption, now more generally adopted than the former doctrine, viz. that rewards and punishments will be inflicted after death for the conduct of men in this life.

II. That the *literal sense* of the account differs essentially from the views of those who give it that construction.

III. That the passage is a *parable*.

IV. That the Saviour referred to the heathen notions concerning Tartarus and Elysium, which had been in part imbibed by the Jews, from which he drew his imagery;—not, however, to acknowledge the heathen fables to be well founded, but, by the parabolic use of them, to set forth a train of interesting facts.

V. What is its true application.

VI. That commentators of various sects, and of very high authority, have given that application.

VII. That the objections urged against this interpretation are not well founded.

I. It is believed, by some, that God elected to his favor, before the world was created, those who will finally be saved; and that he reprobated to his eternal ire all the rest of mankind. What evidence does the parable before us furnish in favor of this doctrine? What do we find about election and reprobation? Are we informed that the rich man was reprobated to God's eternal wrath? Or that he loved Abraham or Lazarus more? Are we informed that God hated him? Or that Lazarus was elected to God's peculiar favor? We cannot see that any part of this parable favors the notion, either of election or reprobation. How then does the parable afford this doctrine any proof? How can it prove that to which it does not make even a reference?

The other doctrine of which we spoke is this, viz. that mankind will be recompensed in the future state for the vices and virtues of this world. Understanding the parable *literally*, what evidence does it furnish in favor of this doctrine? We read that the rich man was in torments in *hades*; but it is not said it was because he had been wicked: and we read that the beggar was happy; but it is not said it was because he had been good. We see no evidence in the parable, that the rich man was a bad man, or that the beggar was better than he. We are not informed that the former obtained his riches improperly, or that the beggar did not become poor by his own negligence or imprudence.

It has been alleged against the rich man, that he refused Lazarus the crumbs which fell from his table. If this be a fact, why did Lazarus lay at his gate? We should judge by the account, that some persons, through compassion, perhaps the friends of the beggar, carried him to the rich man's gate, and laid him there, in the hope that he would receive alms. Would they have done this, had they known the rich man to be covetous? Of all places the rich man's gate was selected, as the most proper for

the beggar to occupy. Besides, the word translated *desiring* in the account, is sometimes rendered *delighting*.*

* The word here rendered *desiring* is *πιθυμων*. Of this word Parkhurst says, that, written with an infinitive following, it signifies ‘*to be content, or glad, to esteem it a great matter*;’ and he adduces the instance in the parable before us, of its occurring in this sense. To which he adds, ‘thus Elsner on Luke xvi. 21, explains it, and observes not only that the LXX. have so applied it, Isa. lviii. 2, but that Lysias has used it in a like sense, Orat. 24.’ Lex. on the word. Dr. Campbell says, ‘I agree with those who do not think there is any foundation, in this expression, for saying that he was refused the crumbs. When the historian says, that he was laid at the rich man’s gate, he means not, surely, that he was once there, but that he was usually so placed, which would not probably have happened, if he had got nothing at all. The other circumstances concur in heightening the probability. Such are, the rich man’s immediately knowing him, his asking that he might be made the instrument of the relief he wanted; and, let me add this, that though the Patriarch upbraids the rich man with the carelessness and luxury in which he had lived, he says not a word of inhumanity; yet if we consider Lazarus as having experienced it so recently, it could hardly, on this occasion, have failed to be taken notice of. Can we suppose that Abraham, in the charge he brought against him, would have mentioned only the things of least moment, and omitted those of the greatest?’ ‘Much injury has been done to our Saviour’s instructions by the ill-judged endeavors of some expositors to improve and strengthen them. I know no better example for illustrating this remark, than the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Many, dissatisfied with its simplicity, as related by the evangelist, and desirous, one would think, to vindicate the character of the judge from the charge of excessive severity in the condemnation of the former, load that wretched man with all the crimes that blacken human nature, and for which they have *no authority* from the words of inspiration. They will have him to have been glutton and a drunkard, rapacious and unjust, cruel and hard-hearted, one who spent in intemperance what he had acquired by extortion and fraud. Now, I must be allowed to remark, that, by so doing, they totally pervert the design of this most instructive lesson.’ &c. Thus far Dr. Campbell. See his whole note on Luke xvi. 21. Adam Clarke’s note is to the same purport, as follows; ‘It is likely his desire was complied with; for it is not intimated that he spurned away the poor man from his gate, or that his suit was rejected. And as we find, ver. 24, that the rich man desired that Lazarus should be sent with a little water to him, it is a strong intimation that he considered him under some kind of obligation to him: for had he refused him a few crumbs in his time, it is not reasonable to suppose, that he would now have requested such a favor from him; nor does Abraham glance at any such uncharitable conduct on the part of the rich man.’ Comment on Luke xvi. 21. Bp. Pearce says, the desire of Lazarus was probably complied with, and adds, ‘we may presume that there is a consistency in the several parts of this parable; and, if so, then we may conclude that Lazarus had not been refused relief at the rich man’s door; otherwise the rich man would have asked for any other, rather than Lazarus, to be sent to him.’ Com. on Luke xvi. 24.

Now if we read that the beggar *delighted* to be fed with the crumbs, is not this a proof that he was not denied them? How then will the parable prove that men will be punished in the future state, because they are sinful in this world? We repeat, we see no evidence that the rich man was a bad man. The prayer which he offered to Abraham is the manifestation of a good spirit. How much better could Lazarus or Abraham have prayed, had either been in the rich man's situation? The rich man prayed that his five brethren might be warned, and prevented from coming to that place of torment. And furthermore, Abraham seems at one time to be accounting for the rich man's torment: but he says nothing about any previous wickedness in him. 'Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.' He did not say, Remember thou in thy life-time wast wicked, but Lazarus good. And it is surely no presumption that he was wicked, because he received 'good things' in this life; for we read 'the *upright* shall have *good things* in possession.' (Prov. xxviii. 10.) And, on the other hand, it is declared, 'Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no *evil thing*.' (Eccles. viii. 5.)

II. *The literal sense of the passage differs essentially from the views of those who give it that construction.*

We often hear that such as go to hell never have one holy feeling; no desire for the company of the blessed; that they spend their time in blaspheming God. Was it so with the rich man? Do we read of his blaspheming God? No; but we read of his offering up a prayer, and a good one, too. 'I *pray* thee therefore, father,' said he, 'that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus) to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Did he not, in this language, breathe forth a good desire? Did he not show a holy feeling? Again: Abraham, when speaking of the great gulf, said it was fixed 'so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.' Here two

things should be noticed. 1. There were some with Abraham that would go to the rich man; but could not. And, 2. There were some with the rich man who would go to Abraham; but could not. It appears from this, that there were some in hell who had a desire for the company of the blessed, and would have gone to them, had it been in their power. And suppose the common idea of a devil be correct, how would he be pleased to have so benevolent a prayer as that of the rich man, offered up in his dark dominions? It will be seen, from these considerations, that the literal sense of the passage is directly opposed to the views of those who give it that construction.

Now let us turn to Abraham and those with him. It is commonly supposed, that those who are in heaven are happy, and perfectly reconciled to the will of God. We have already shown that there were some in the place of happiness who would go to the rich man; but could not. They were not, therefore, perfectly happy, inasmuch as they were desirous of doing that which they were not permitted to do. Neither were they reconciled to the will of God; for it was the will of God that they should not go, and he had made the great gulf to prevent them. Wishing to do what was not permitted to be done, they were unhappy, and being unreconciled to God, they were wicked. If wicked, they must have been miserable. So we have one argument to prove that those who were with Abraham were wicked, and two that they were miserable. How will this agree with the opinion of those who contend that the parable is a literal relation of facts? How can the passage be understood with propriety in its *literal sense*?

But it may be said, those in heaven were benevolent, sympathetic, and were urged by good motives to endeavor to relieve the distressed. Permit us to ask, how could they be ignorant of God's determination to punish the wicked eternally? And will it be said, they were better than God? Was not he as good, sympathetic and benevolent as they? Let those who interpret the passage in its literal sense consider these things. Let them tell us why those in heaven wished to go to hell. Was it to

abide there? Was it to relieve some friend, some relation? Would some parent comfort his child? Some child, its parent? Some brother, a sister? Some husband, a wife? No, it is usually said, the saints say ‘Amen, alleluia,’ when they see the smoke of the torment of the wicked ascend. How will those who do not allow that the passage is a parable, surmount these difficulties?

Let us pursue this inquiry a little farther. It is said, ‘The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom.’ Will it be allowed that this is true in its *literal* sense? Was the beggar really waited upon by angels at his death? and did they receive him, and transport him to the bosom of Abraham? It should be remembered, too, that all the events of this parable are represented as taking place in the state of the dead. There is nothing said of the resurrection of Lazarus, or Abraham, or the rich man. The heathen, and the Jews also, gave a fabulous existence to the departed in the *under-world*, or state of death; and it is on their views, in this respect, that the parable is founded. There is not a hint in the whole parable of the Christian doctrine of a *resurrection* into a future immortal life. It is the common opinion among Christians, that the dead are clothed again with bodies at the resurrection. Now we call on those who adopt the common interpretation of this parable, to reconcile their views on the topic of the *resurrection* with the plain literal sense of the passage. Here Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man are represented as having their bodies,—eyes, ears, tongues, fingers—a representation which agrees well enough with the heathen and Jewish notions of the continued being of the departed; but how, we ask, will it agree with the acknowledged and well-defined views of Christians concerning the *resurrection*? Again, it cannot be maintained by any one that the passage before us is to have a reference to what is to transpire after the *resurrection*, because neither of the individuals mentioned is represented as having been raised from the dead. And when the rich man wishes Lazarus sent to his five brethren, (i. e. sent back again into this world,) Abraham replies, ‘Neither will they

be persuaded though one *rose from the dead*,' an expression which shows that they were regarded as in the state of death, and not in the state of the *resurrection*. This being settled, how will those who adopt the common interpretation of the parable reconcile it with their acknowledged views concerning a future *general judgment*? This is a notion that is not incorporated into the parable, but appears, on the contrary, to be inconsistent with it. In this judgment, so frequently described by modern divines, we are told every individual will be tried, and sentenced according to the deeds done in the body,—that the righteous will be received into heaven, and the wicked sent down to hell, a place of darkness, anguish and despair. Will the literal sense of the parable agree with these views? How does it happen that the rich man is in hell before this judgment takes place? Is he doomed to punishment before he is adjudged guilty? How does it happen that Abraham and Lazarus and the rich man are all so near each other that they can converse with ease, and see one another plainly? In the third place, how does it happen, that there is no reference made to this *judgment* in any way? It would have been of all things the most natural for Abraham to have mentioned it to the rich man, in the course of the alleged conversation; but the grave is not more silent than he was about anything of the kind.

Having proceeded thus far in the examination of the parable before us, we may be permitted to sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived. We have seen, that, on the supposition it is a literal relation of facts, and not a parable, it will *not prove the doctrines of election and reprobation*, as they have been held by orthodox divines; nor will it prove that *men are to be rewarded or punished in the future world for the deeds of this life*. Moreover, we have seen that the literal sense of the passage is directly and strikingly opposed to the acknowledged views of those who adopt that construction. If the passage be received in its literal sense, this is all that can be made out of it in favor of the common notion of future punishment, viz. it would prove that one individual was tormented after

death; but for how long a time, whether for a day or an hour, we could not tell.. It is certain it would not then prove the doctrine of *endless torment*, because *hades*, in every sense in which the word is used, is to be destroyed. '*O hades, I will be thy destruction,*' (Hos. xiii. 14.) '*And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire,*' (Rev. xx. 14.) And especially as applying to the state of the dead, Paul teaches its destruction, (1 Cor. xv. 55.) Let us now proceed to a very careful consideration of the question, whether this passage is a parable.

III. There is sufficient evidence, both internal and external, to prove that the passage is a parable. We will first briefly examine the internal. It is stated the beggar was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Now we ask, Can any one suppose that this is to be understood in the *literal* sense? These people are represented as having bodily organs and powers. The rich man had eyes and a tongue, and Lazarus fingers. Can this be interpreted literally? Do disembodied spirits in the world to come have eyes, and tongues, and fingers, and the powers of speech, of hearing and seeing? * We believe this is not

* *Lift up his eyes.* 'These words, like as some of the following, must not be understood properly, for the soul being a spiritual being, hath neither eyes, nor tongue, nor fingers, but by similitude, &c.' See the Dutch Annotations, according to the translation of the Bible as ordered by the Synod of Dort. London, 1657.

Ver. 19. 'This is more likely to be a parable than a true history.'

23. *Lift up.* 'All this ought to be understood figuratively.' See pious and learned Annotations on the Holy Bible by John Diodati, of Geneva. London, 1651.

Dr. Whitby argues conclusively that the passage is a parable, and states that it was not original with Jesus, but was quoted by him from some Jewish writings. 'That this is only a parable, and not a real history of what was actually done, is evident, 1st, because we find this very parable in the *Gemara Babylonicum*, whence it is cited by Mr. Sheringham, in the preface to his *Joma*. 2d, From the circumstances of it, viz. the rich man's lifting up his eyes in hell, and seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, his discourse with Abraham, his complaint of being tormented with flames, and his desire that Lazarus might be sent to cool his tongue; and if all this be confessedly parable, why should the rest, which is the very parable in the *Gemara*, be accounted history?' Note on Luke xvi. 29.

Archbishop Tillotson remarks, that in some ancient MSS. the passage commences as follows: 'And he spake a parable unto them, say-

the common opinion upon the subject. However, it belongs to those who say the passage is not a parable, to solve these difficulties, and show us how people in heaven and hell can converse with apparent ease from so great a distance.

The external evidence that the passage is a parable, is the connexion in which it is found. We should maintain a due relation and propriety throughout our Lord's discourse. But we see no way to do this, if we do not consider the passage a parable. It is found connected with a number of parables, in Luke xv. and xvi. as we have already shown.

In the beginning of the 15th chapter, we find that the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, because Jesus received sinners and ate with them. In the three parables which fill up the remainder of that chapter, viz. that of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Piece of Silver, and of the Prodigal Son, Jesus vindicated that part of his conduct of which they had complained. But in the last of these three parables, a character was presented which had not appeared in either of the others. This was the elder son, who was angry because the prodigal was received into favor, and who very justly represented the Scribes and Pharisees ; for they murmured because Jesus Christ received sinners

ing, There was a certain rich man,' &c. See his Sermon on the parable. Dr. Hammond gives his unqualified opinion that this is a parable, in his commentary on the passage.

But the language of the venerable Dr. Lightfoot is strong and energetic. He throws the contrary opinion into ridicule. 'Whosoever believes this not to be a parable, but a true story, let him believe also those little Friars, whose trade it is to show the monuments at Jerusalem to pilgrims, and point exactly to the place where the house of the rich glutton stood : most accurate keepers of antiquity, indeed ! who, after so many hundreds of years, such overthrows of Jerusalem, such devastations and changes, can rake out of the rubbish the place of so private a house, and such an one, too, that never had any being, but merely in parable. And that it was a parable, not only the consent of all expositors may assure us, but the thing itself speaks it.' (Works, xii. 157, 158.) The learned and orthodox Dr. Proudfit very judiciously remarks, 'We are not to conclude that such persons [the rich man and Lazarus] actually existed, but they are introduced for the occasion, to urge more strongly the moral intended.' Lectures on Parables, p. 190.

and ate with them. These Pharisees rejected the gospel; and this is represented by the elder son's refusing to go into his father's house. In the parable of the Unjust Steward, with which the 16th chapter is commenced, the same people are admonished for not making such improvement of the law, as would introduce them into the Christian faith and church. The Pharisees, being provoked at this, derided Jesus. After briefly describing to them their conduct, he says, 'The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.' (xvi. 16.) Jesus then spake another parable, in which the folly of the Jews, in rejecting the gospel and adhering to the law, is represented by the sin of adultery. We have already shown this fact at the close of the notes on the preceding parable of the Unjust Steward. Rev. M. Rayner, in his late Lectures, has a fine passage on this point, which we take the liberty to transcribe. 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery ; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.' This has been commonly understood *literally*; and the crime here named has been referred to a breach of one of the precepts of the moral law : 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Dr. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the passage, appears to understand it in that sense, and is at a loss to account for its introduction in this place. He thinks it may have been a part of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and it would stand in a much better connexion there than here. And so it might, if it should be taken literally. Whereas, if it be understood as spoken parabolically, as we are well satisfied it should be, its introduction in this place is natural, the meaning important, and the argument very forcible. Our Saviour was speaking of the *legal* dispensation, and its obligations, while it continued in force ; but that being fulfilled and accomplished, it was abrogated, or *put away*, and had no longer any binding authority. This he very fitly illustrates in the passage under consideration, concerning adultery, which is evidently in the nature of a parable; and the

sense intended to be conveyed appears to be this,—that should the Jews have put away the law before the time for its abrogation had arrived, they would have been guilty of a sin, like that of a man who should put away his wife and marry another ; but they committed the same, or a similar offence, by adhering to the law after the days of John, since which time the *kingdom of God* was preached ; for they were like the man who married her that was put away by her husband ; they remained attached and united to a dispensation which had come to an end, its life-time having expired, and of course it could have no further claim upon them.* This, I think, appears very clearly to be the meaning of the passage ; and, in this view, its connexion and propriety are very obvious. If any further illustration of this case were necessary, I might refer you to the same argument employed by St. Paul, and represented by the same figure, or similitude. The passage is in the 7th of Romans, as follows : ‘ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath power over a man as long as he liveth. For the woman who hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth ; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress ; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.’ Now hear his application of this supposed case : ‘ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Now,’ continues the Apostle, ‘ we are delivered from the law, *that* being dead, wherein we were

* Mr. Rayner seems to intimate here, in a note, that this exposition was originally mine. I ought to say, therefore, that, so far as I am informed, this exposition was originally given by Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston. See his Notes on the Parables, 4th ed. pp. 252, 253. And also his Sermon on the parable ; (Select Sermons, p. 45;) and his more recent work, Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, p. 101.

held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.' *

Thus far Mr. Rayner; and we think it is satisfactorily settled, that by the figure concerning adultery, (ver. 18,) Jesus pointed out the fault of the Jews in continuing their adherence to the law. Then come the words of the passage before us: 'There was a certain rich man,' &c. What is there in all this connexion which would have the least tendency to lead the mind to the doctrine which the passage is used to support? It has been justly said, 'To suppose that he who spake as never man spake, abruptly dropped the subject of the end of the law dispensation, and the introduction of the gospel, or kingdom of heaven, and having no further allusion to this subject, proceeded to give an account of the sin of adultery, which account occupies but one verse, and then again flies directly from this subject, to give a literal account about a rich man and a beggar, in this world and in an eternal state, is so unwarrantable, and so derogatory to the character of the divine orator, that it is a matter of wonder that such an opinion should ever have been honored with the consent of learned commentators.' † We may rationally infer, then, from what has been said, that the object of Jesus in the parable was not to establish the notion of punishment in *hades*, but to set forth the obstinacy of the Jews in rejecting the gospel of Christ, and its reception by the Gentiles, an interpretation which harmonizes, in a peculiarly happy manner, with the whole context.

IV. We proceed to show, that the Saviour referred, in the parable, not to the views concerning *hades* entertained by the sacred writers, but to heathen notions of Tartarus and Elysium, which had been in part imbibed by the Jews;—not, however, to acknowledge the heathen fables to be well founded, but, by the parabolic use of them, to set forth a train of interesting facts.

* See the excellent work of Rev. Menzies Rayner, being nine Lectures on this parable, pp. 126—128. Boston, 1833.

† Ballou's Select Sermons, p. 41. Boston, 1832.

Let it be observed then, that it is settled unquestionably that this passage is a *parable*. We have proved it in three ways, viz. from the passage itself, from the context, and from the testimony of judicious and impartial commentators. *Hades* is used as a *figure*, and so are all the personages who are mentioned. We now come to a very important inquiry, viz. Does the representation of *hades* in the parable, agree with the views of the sacred writers on that subject? Every body knows that *hades* is regarded in the Old Testament, not as the abode of departed wicked men, but as the *state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of persons, their happiness or misery*. This was the meaning of the Hebrew word *sheol*, which the LXX. have almost invariably rendered *hades*. All men go down to *hades* at death, where they remain till the resurrection. It is said in the scriptures that our Saviour's soul was in hell, *hades*; not in a place of torment; but in the state of the dead, the grave. There it did not remain, for he rose from the dead. (Acts ii. 27.) In the Improved Version, the place is called 'the unseen state,' and in Wakefield's translation, 'the grave.' Wakefield says, in his note on this place, 'It must be remembered that *hades* no where means hell, *gehenna*, in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane*; and also that our Lord is giving his hearers a *parable*, (Matt. xiii. 34,) and not a piece of *real history*. To them who regard the narrative as exhibiting a *reality*, it must stand as an unanswerable argument for the *purgatory* of the *Papists*. The universal meaning of *hades* is the *state of death*.' Whitby says, 'Sheol throughout the Old Testament, and Hades in the Septuagint, answering to it, signify not a place of punishment, or of the souls of *bad men only*, but the *grave only*, or the place of death.' He says, Hades is the place —'whither we are all going.' Jacob went there; Job desired, yea prayed to go there; Hezekiah expected to go there, for he said, 'I shall go to the gates of *hades*.' Whitby further says, 'The ancient Greeks assigned one *hades* to all that died, and therefore say, *Hades receives*

*all mortal men together, all men shall go to hades.** Dr Campbell, a believer in endless misery, gives us the same account of *hades*. This, then, is what we must understand the word hell to mean, when it stands for *hades*,—a place to which all men go, good and bad. We must not, when we contemplate it, look forward beyond the resurrection. All men, as Christians believe, will be raised from *hades* to incorruption and immortality. *Then hades* will be destroyed. Our word hell, in its original signification, perfectly corresponded to the definition we have given of *hades*. At the present time it does not; with Christians generally, its meaning somehow has been changed; but we are informed, we believe by Dr. Doddridge, that the original sense of the word *hell* is now retained in the eastern, and especially in the western counties of England; where to *hele* over a thing is to cover it. Hence says Dr. Campbell, ‘*It (hades) ought never in the scripture to be rendered hell, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians.*’ He says, that with the meaning of *hades*, ‘the word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret, or concealed.’ The rich man, and the beggar, and Abraham, were all represented as being in *hades* together. We do not read that one was in hell, but the other two in heaven. This fact differs materially, we know, from the common opinion on this subject; but we see no way to avoid it. The passage contains not one word to the contrary. Nay, it rather favors the idea. For otherwise, how could the rich man see Abraham and Lazarus? How could he converse with Abraham, and how could Abraham hear him?

Hades bears the same sense in the New Testament that it does in the Old. Wherever it has reference to the future state, it signifies merely the state of the dead. In this realm of darkness, silence and undisturbed unconsciousness, Christianity contemplates all men, until the trumpet of the resurrection shall call them forth to the enjoyment

*Com. on Acts ii. 26, 27.

of immortal and incorruptible life. The parable before us furnishes the *only instance* in the Bible, in which *hades* is spoken of as a place of punishment after death. And why is it so spoken of here? For this plain reason, not because the sacred writers ever regarded it as a place of future punishment, (for no such instance can be found) but because the heathen, and the half-heathenized Jews so regarded it; and Jesus saw fit to adopt their strange notions, which no person will now carry out to their full extent, as the imagery of a parable. My readers will be interested in the following frank confessions of two very eminent critics. 'The world hath been filled with disputes about the true signification of the word *hades*, which is here translated *hell*. The most probably true notion of it is, that it signifies the *state of the dead*, both of the dead body, and so it often signifieth the grave, and of the departed soul. A very learned man saith, that if he mistaketh not, this [parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus] is the only text in Scripture, in which by it is to be understood the *place of torments*. The Hebrew word which is translated by this, far more often signifieth the *place of the blessed*, whither the saints and patriarchs went when they died, than the place whither sinners went.'* Here, from the fact that good men go to *hades* as well as bad, this writer infers that the word sometimes means *heaven*, the place of the blessed. Its true meaning however is, merely the state of the dead. Again, another writer says, 'All learned Hebricians know that *Sheol* (or *Hades*) is more proper for the *grave* than for Hell; and that the Hebrews have no word proper for Hell, as we take Hell.'† This has respect to the ancient Jews, before they imbibed heathen notions; they had no word to signify a place of future punishment; but there is no doubt that they would have had the word, if they had believed in such a place.

The reader is now requested to inquire, whether *hades*, as it is represented in the parable, is not widely different

* Poole's Continuator on the passage.

† Leigh's Critica Sacra. London, 1601.

from *hades*, as we read of it in the Old and New Testaments? What is *hades* as it appears in the parable? It is a *place of torment*, divided into two apartments, between which a great gulf, or river is seen. The one is the place of the blessed, the other of the miserable. When a man dies, angels wait for his soul, and convey it to that part of *hades* to which he properly belongs. The inhabitants of this region, separated by the gulf, have a view of each other; they converse together without difficulty, as individuals do upon the earth; they ask and deny favors; they remember former relationship, and the events which transpired on earth. Now, we affirm that these notions are not *scriptural*; they are clearly heathen and Jewish. Who will say, that Jesus intended to recognize the wild reveries of the heathen, in regard to the unseen world? Do the views of departed souls given in the parable, agree with the account of a future life given by Jesus when he was on earth? Far from it. Which then is the more reasonable, that he intended palpably to contradict himself? or only that he adopted the heathen fables as the imagery of a parable?

We have said that the sentiments of this parable are clearly *heathen and Jewish*, and not Christian. We proceed to prove it. First, as to the soul's being carried away by angels. Lightfoot says, 'The Rabbins have an *invention*, that there are three bands of angels attend the death of wicked men, proclaiming, There is no peace saith the Lord, unto the wicked.' But what conceptions they have of angels being present at the death of good men, let us judge from the following passage:

'The men Tsippor said, Whoever tells us that Rabbi Judah is dead, we will kill him. Bar Kaphra, looking upon them with his head veiled with a hood, said unto them, Holy men and angels took hold of the tables of the covenant, and the hand of the angels prevailed: so that they took away the tables. They said unto him, Is Rabbi dead, then? The meaning of this parabolizer was this; holy men would fain have detained R. Judah still in the

land of the living, but the angels took him away.'* Dr. Whitby gives us the following passage on the subject: 'The Targum on Can. iv. 12, saith, 'No man hath power to enter into the garden of Eden, but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the hand of angels. See Cartwright on Luke ii. 29, p. 2994. They add that when evil men die, the evil angels come and say, There is no peace to the wicked. And in like manner Socrates in Phæd. saith, *it is reported, that as soon as any man dies, every one's demon whom he chose to himself while he lived, brings him to a certain place, where all men are to be judged*, and then he goes to *hades* with the Governor to whom it was appointed to bring them that depart hence to those places.'† So the phrase *Abraham's bosom* is clearly a Jewish expression. In the Bible, the future immortal state is never called *Abraham's bosom*; not an instance of the kind can be found. But the Jews used it in the same sense in which the heathen used *Elysium*. 'Thus it is said of Rabbi Judah, when he died: they say, This day he sits in *Abraham's bosom*. Josephus saith of good men, that they are gathered to the region of the patriarchs, and that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do receive their souls.'‡ Does it not appear reasonable, from what we have here offered, that the parable was formed on heathen and corrupted Jewish notions concerning the state of the dead? If, then, we allow, that it is a literal account, or that the views of the state of the dead, on which it is founded, are to be received as truth, are we not compelled thus to adopt some of

* Works, xii. 249.

† Comment on Luke xvi. 22.

‡ Whitby as above. The following, from Beausobre and L'Enfant, strengthens the authority already quoted. Ver. 22. [*Les Anges.*] Suivant l'opinion des Docteurs Juifs, qui croyoient que les Anges portoient les justes dans les Paradis.' 'Le sein d'Abraham.] C'est une phrase des Docteurs Juifs pour exprimer l'état de la Felicite, qui'ils apeloient aussi Paradis, le jardin d'Eden, le trone de la Gloire.' Ver. 23. [*Aperçut de loin.*] Les Paraboles sont faites sur les idées communes. Les Juifs d'alors avoient emprunte des Grecs leurs termes pour exprimer l'autre vie, et ils se figuroient que le lieu des bien-heureux, et celui des mechans n'étoit sépare que par un grand fleure en sorte qu'ils pouvoient se voir et se parle. See their Commentary.

the idlest vagaries of the heathen mythologists? On this subject, I beg leave to submit the following remarks from that well-known Scotch divine, Dr. Macknight. After having remarked, that the *opinions*, as well as the *language* of the Greeks had, in the time of Christ, made their way into Judea, he adds: ‘It must be acknowledged that our Lord’s descriptions of those things are not drawn from the writings of the Old Testament, but have a remarkable affinity to the descriptions which the Grecian poets have given of them. They, as well as our Lord, represent the abodes of the blessed as lying contiguous to the region of the damned, and separated only by a great impassable river or deep gulf, in such a sort that the ghosts could talk to one another from its opposite banks. In the parable, souls whose bodies were buried, know each other, and converse together as if they had been embodied. In like manner the Pagans introduce departed souls talking together, and represent them as having pains and pleasures analogous to what we feel in this life: it seems they thought that the shades of the dead had an exact resemblance to their bodies. The parable says, The souls of wicked men are tormented in flames; the Grecian mythologists tell us they lie in Beriphlegethon, which is a river of fire, where they suffer the same torments they would have suffered while alive, had their bodies been burnt. If from these resemblances it is thought the parable is formed on the Grecian mythology, it will not at all follow that *our Lord approved of what the common people thought or spake concerning those matters*, agreeably to the notions and language of the Greeks. In parabolical discourses, provided the doctrines inculcated are strictly true, the terms in which they are inculcated may be such as are most familiar to the ears of the vulgar, and the images made use of such as they are best acquainted with.’*

We have now shown what were the views of the sacred writers in regard to *hades*; we have shown that the notions of *hades* found in the parable, are altogether different

* Paraphrase and Com. on the place.

from their views ; we have shown, furthermore, that the notions of *hades*, in the parable, are clearly those of the *heathen*, and such as the Jews adopted after their associations with the heathen, from which we have drawn, as we think, a very just inference, viz. that Jesus did not intend to recognize the fables of the Jews and the heathen as *true*, but employed them only as the imagery of the parable, in the same way that the trees were made to talk, and to go forth to choose a king, in one of the parables of the Old Testament, (Judges ix. 8—15,) which, in the literal sense, nobody believes ever took place. Something else was taught under the figure ; and we can see just as much propriety in adopting the literal sense of one of these parables as the other.

The learned Dr. Campbell gives the whole weight of his authority in favor of the supposition, that the Jews had been corrupted in their views by the heathen, and that the form of the parable was drawn from the heathen notions which they had imbibed. He says, ‘It is plain that in the Old Testament the most profound silence is observed in regard to the state of the deceased, their joys, or sorrows, happiness or misery.’ The opinions neither of Hebrews nor of the heathen, remained invariably the same. And from the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire, and afterwards to the Roman ; as they had a closer intercourse with pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects, whereon their law was silent, and wherein by consequence, they considered themselves as at greater freedom. On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour’s time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion, that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and of suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not indeed adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express

themselves entirely in the same manner ; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *Hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *Sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations for ghosts of different characters.' Here we have our question answered. On whose authority did the Jews believe that *Hades* was a place of punishment ? Ans. On the authority of the heathen. The Dr. says, 'They insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects whereon their law was silent, and wherein, by consequence, they thought themselves as at greater freedom. *On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets.*' 'The general train of thinking,' says he, 'in both (i. e. Jews and heathen) came pretty much to coincide.' *

Now we believe that it was to this opinion, that *Hades* was divided into different habitations, peopled by good and bad spirits, that our Lord alluded in the parable. Hence, both Abraham and the rich man are represented as being in one place, divided into different apartments by the great gulf. The Jews were tenacious of these opinions ; and our Lord used them as figures of an important truth. And the reason why he spake in parables generally, may be rendered why he thus spake in the passage before us. He did not allude to their doctrine to recognize it as truth ; no,—and all the evidence we find in the passage of the truth of the heathen notions concerning *Hades* is, that he used them as a similitude.†

The question may here be asked, whether the Jews would not understand Christ as teaching the doctrine of

* See Campbell's Four Gospels, Dis. vi. Part ii. Sec. 19.

† Thus Dr. Lighfoot says, on Matt. xii. 45, 'These words seem to have been spoken by our Saviour according to the capacity of the common people, or rather according to the deceit put upon them, more than according to the reality or truth of the thing itself; taking a parable from something commonly believed and entertained, that he might express the thing which he propounded, more plainly and familiarly.' Works, xi. 203.

future punishment, from the terms employed in this parable? It is sufficient to say, in reply to this objection, that we have no account they did so understand him. Of this objection, however, we shall speak more fully, under the *seventh* head. The Jews would have been no more likely to understand Christ as adopting the heathen fables concerning *Hades*, than the apostles. But where do we find an instance that any one of the apostles ever taught that *Hades* is a place of future punishment? If they had understood Jesus as teaching this alleged fact, they also would have taught it; but not an instance can be found where either of the apostles has given his sanction to that supposition. On the other hand, the opinions entertained by the apostles concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the immortal existence, are at *total variance* with the opinion usually deduced from the parable before us. We have here arrived at a very important point in the discussion of this subject. We say that the description of the future state, as given by Christ and his apostles, is totally at variance with the opinions referred to in the parable; and we, therefore, infer, with a high degree of probability, (we may almost say certainty) that Jesus did not intend to adopt as truth the heathen notions embraced in the parable. The Saviour spoke of the resurrection from the dead as follows: 'In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, *but are as the angels of God in heaven.*' (Matt. xxii. 30.) These were the views of the Saviour, and they were explicitly declared.

Now, how is it possible for any person to make this opinion agree with the notions of the parable, in its literal sense? The parallel passage in Luke is, perhaps, more strong. 'They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' (Luke xx. 35, 36.) All mankind are accounted worthy, in the sight of God, to be raised from the dead. After the resurrection, they shall die no more, they shall

be equal unto the angels ; and they shall be the children of God, because they shall be children of the resurrection. Is it possible to reconcile the views of *Hades* adopted in the parable, with the view of the resurrection as thus given by our Lord Jesus Christ ? If not, it shows us that Jesus did not refer to the notion of punishment in Hades after death, for the purpose of recognizing its truth. Paul supposed, that when he should be absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 8;) and in speaking particularly of the resurrection, he asserts that ‘the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*.’ ‘It is sown in corruption, it is raised in *incorruption*; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in *power*; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in *glory*.’ ‘As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the *heavenly*.’ Death shall be swallowed up in victory, and sin, which is the sting of death, shall be destroyed. (See 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44, 49, 52, 54—56.) The plain question now to be answered, is this,—whether the views of the existence of departed men, on which the parable is founded, are not totally different from *Christian* views of the future state, as given by our Lord and his apostles ? We think every one must see, that the New Testament doctrine of a future life, will not agree with the views of the heathen, as embraced in the parable ; but, on the contrary, are irreconcilably at variance with them. This fact appears to us to go very far in settling the question, whether Jesus intended to recognize as true the notions of the heathen concerning the state of the dead ; for if the only existence which Christianity recognizes subsequent to this life, is an *incorruptible, glorious, spiritual, immortal, sinless* condition, it appears impossible that Jesus intended to acknowledge as true the heathen notions on which the parable is founded.

It should be borne in mind, too, (and we now call the particular attention of the reader to the fact) that this parable is not the only instance which the Bible furnishes, wherein the notions of the heathen concerning *hades* are adopted for the purposes of figure, without any intention

of recognizing them as true. We find a passage in Ezek. xxxi. 15—18, where the temporal destruction of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is thus described : ‘ Thus saith the Lord God, In the day when he went down to the grave, I caused a mourning : I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed ; and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, *when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit* ; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. They also went *down into hell* with him, unto them that be slain with the sword ; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.’ This is a highly figurative description of the *temporal* destruction of Pharaoh, and the Egyptian nation. Their fall is described as a *descent into hell*, into the ‘ nether parts of the earth,’ where they are said to meet those who had been slain with the sword. The whole is unquestionably a metaphor, founded upon the views which prevailed at that time concerning *hades*, or the under-world. But a still more striking passage is found in Isa. xiv., where the overthrow of the king of Babylon is described in the most glowing language. The inhabitants of *hades* rise up to meet him at his approach ; the kings of the lower regions rise from their thrones, and address him. See the passage : ‘ Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased, &c. * * * * * *Hades* from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming : it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth : it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations—all they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we ? Art thou become like unto us ? ’ (vers. 4, 9, 10.) Now let the reader reflect upon this passage one moment. The scene of it is laid in *hades*, or *hell*. The inhabitants are the dead. The dead rise up, and taunt the king of Babylon at his destruction, saying, ‘ Art thou become like

unto us ?' This is literally untrue, and impossible ; because the dead know not any thing. The whole passage is a persopopeia, designed to represent the fall of Babylon. No one supposes that the views of *hades* here introduced by the prophet, were literally correct ; all agree that he used them metaphorically, to give force and beauty to the subject of his prophecy. We take the same ground in regard to the parable before us ; and the argument is precisely as good in the one case as in the other. We maintain that Jesus did not refer to the vulgar notions of *hades* to acknowledge them correct, any more than Isaiah did : they both employed them by way of metaphor. Very few people are aware how often the sacred writers draw their figures from *hades*. 'Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, (the highest state of temporal prosperity) shall be brought down to *hades*', (Matt. xi. 23,) i. e. the lowest temporal degradation. 'On this rock I will build my church, and the *gates of hades* shall not prevail against it.' (Matt. xvi. 18.) Here, *gates of hades* are a metaphor for the powers of wickedness. (See, also, Luke x. 15; Rev. xx. 14, and others.)

We now submit the argument under this head of the examination. If we have proved that the New Testament doctrine of a future life, is irreconcilable with the notions of *hades* on which this parable is founded, how can we adopt those notions as true ? And when we see that it was common for the sacred writers to draw their metaphors from *hades*, referring even to the *gates*, and representing the dead as talking to each other, and welcoming the approach of those who went down to destruction, we find that we are obliged to adopt the same principle of interpretation in regard to many other passages that we do in regard to the parable before us. These considerations convince us beyond a doubt, that the parable should be explained upon the principles we have laid down.

V. What was the object of Jesus in uttering the parable ? What fact did he intend to enforce ? He intended to point out the obstinacy of the Jews in adhering to the law of Moses, after the time for its abrogation had arriv-

ed ; to show that the Gentiles (who had been beggars in the estimation of the Jews) would receive the gospel and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the gospel kingdom ; and that the Jews would be cast into outer darkness, and suffer the consequences of their obstinacy.

1st. By the *rich man* the Scribes and Pharisees are intended, to whom this parable, and some of the preceding, were spoken. (See Luke xv. 2; xvi. 14, 15.) The Pharisees were covetous, and thirsted after the riches of this world. (Compare vers. 13, 14.) They may be said to have controlled the ecclesiastical affairs of the Jews, and the whole nation was in a great measure governed by their influence. The nation was prevented by them from embracing the Messiah.

2d. By the *beggar*, the Gentiles are represented. In regard to divine knowledge, they had been poor indeed when compared with the Jews. They had no knowledge of God, nor of his law ; and they worshipped the idols which their own hands had fashioned.

3d. By the *death* of the two individuals, is intended the change which was then about to take place in the circumstances of the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews were soon to be deprived of their national privileges, because they had not made a good use of them, and were to be cast into outer darkness, and suffer the most tremendous evils that had ever befallen any nation. This was the rich man, in his torments, after he had been cast down from his exalted situation, which certainly is well described as being brought down to *hades*. (See Matt. xi. 23.) On the other hand, the Gentiles were to experience a change equally great. They were to be brought to the knowledge of God, and of that gospel which was preached, originally, to Abraham. ‘To Abraham and his seed were the promises made.’ (Gal. iii. 16 ; Heb. vi. 13.) In this way the Gentiles were to become ‘children of Abraham.’ ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.’ (Gal. iii. 6, 7.) It is for this reason that Lazarus is represented as

being *blessed with Abraham in hades*. He had embraced the faith of Abraham. So Paul says, ‘They which be of faith *are blessed with faithful Abraham*.’ (Gal. iii. 9.) Again, ‘If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise,’ (ver. 29.) Lazarus is, therefore, very fitly represented as being in, or, more appropriately, reclining on, Abraham’s bosom. The figure is very striking, to show that the blessing of the Gentiles is the same that Abraham himself enjoyed.*

4th. The rich man sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Jesus refers to the same circumstance in the following words : ‘There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they [the Gentiles] shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.’ (Luke xiii. 28, 29 ; Matt. viii. 11.) Dr. Whitby says, very appropriately, ‘To lie down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, doth not here signify to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven

* *Abraham’s bosom.* This figure is drawn from the customs of the Jews at their feasts. When reclining on their couches at table, they sometimes placed their heads on one another’s bosom, as a sign of equality and strict union among the guests. So John is said to have laid on Jesus’ breast, (John xiii. 25.) See Bp. Pearce on Luke xvi. 22, and Horne’s Intro. iii. 304. By Lazarus being in Abraham’s bosom, or lying on his bosom, denotes his elevation to the same rank with the patriarch at the repast of the gospel, and the strict union between them. The whole is a figure, however, and denotes the same as when it is said, that ‘Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall lie down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.’ (Matt. viii. 11.) They should enter into the same kingdom, of which Abraham was a member, by believing the promises concerning Christ; and they should, by faith, enjoy in that kingdom a strict equality and communion with him. Mr. Rayner says, ‘Where is the happiness of the future life represented by being in Abraham’s bosom? Certainly no where in the Bible, unless it be in this passage, and we are persuaded it is not so described here. And where, we inquire further, would be the fitness of such a representation,—any more than if it should have been set forth by being in the bosom of Adam, or Enoch, or Moses, or Isaiah, or any of those holy prophets by whose mouth God hath spoken of the restitution of all things, since the world began?’—Lectures, pp. 27, 28.

with them, but only to become the sons of Abraham through faith, (Gal. iii. 7,) and so be blessed with faithful Abraham.* The simple meaning is, the Gentiles would become disciples of Christ, and by faith, partakers of the gospel with Abraham.

The rich man calls upon Abraham, whom he addresses by the title of Father. This is characteristic of the Jews. Abraham was their father ; and they seemed proud of their progenitor. Speaking to our Saviour, they said, ‘Art thou greater than our father Abraham ?’ (John viii. 53.) John told them, ‘ Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.’ (Matt. iii. 9.) Yes, they would be in favor with Abraham.† They disbelieved Jesus ; they abused their privileges ; they relied upon their national greatness, and the glory of their ancestors. When in distress, they turned to Abraham for mercy. But their national greatness was gone, and the glory of their ancestors afforded them no relief. Abraham is represented as recognizing the relationship. He refers the rich man to his former condition, as well as to that of the beggar, and seems to give this as a reason why the former was tormented and the latter blessed. Such is according to the equality of God’s ways. The Jews had possessed a knowledge of God, and been blessed for a long time, while the Gentiles had been without hope, and without God in the world. Now, the scene is reversed, according to the appointment of God. ‘ It was necessary,’ said the apostles to them, ‘ that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.’ (Acts xiii. 46, 47.)

5th. The gulf. The Jews having failed to avail themselves of the ministry of Christ to their advantage,

* Corn. on Matt. viii. 11.

† Jesus speaks of Abraham as the father of the Jews. ‘ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.’ John viii. 56. See a note on this subject under the parable of the Axe, pp. 37, 38, of this work.

and having crucified him, and murdered his disciples, were unavoidably condemned to darkness and destruction. The time came, therefore, when they could not enter into the kingdom of the gospel. Of this fact, Jesus forewarned them in the parable of the Master of the House, (Luke xiii. 25—29.) ‘When once the master of the house is risen up, and shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are : then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in *our streets*. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not, whence ye are : depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, &c.’ The circumstance that prevented their embracing the gospel at that time, was well represented by the gulf between Abraham and the rich man. Jesus seems to refer to their same sad fate in these words : ‘If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ; *but now they are hid from thine eyes*. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another : because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.’ (Luke xix. 42—44.) In the time of their destruction, though they would have entered the kingdom, they could not ; neither, on the other hand, could the Christians, with their utmost philanthropy, save them from darkness, and effect their deliverance. Paul says,—‘My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved.’ (Rom. x. 1.) And again he says,—‘I say the truth in Christ, and lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that *myself were accursed from Christ*, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.’ (Rom. ix. 1—3.)

6th. The obstinacy of the Jews, in rejecting the Messiah, is set forth in the following words : ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’ In order to illustrate this obstinacy, the imagery proceeds in this way : the rich man says he has five brethren, and he entreats that Lazarus may be sent to them, to testify unto them, lest they also should come into the same situation with himself. Abraham replies, ‘They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.’ The rich man seems to admit, that they had disregarded Moses and the prophets, and adds, ‘If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.’ Abraham then assures him of their unconquerable obstinacy, which a resurrection from the dead would not overcome. And this assertion of Abraham was subsequently proved true, for Jesus did raise a real Lazarus from the dead ; but the Jews were enraged at the miracle, and sought to kill him, because many in consequence believed.

Thus we have shown, as we proposed, that the design of this parable was to point out the obstinacy of the Jews in adhering to the law of Moses, after the time for its abrogation had arrived ; that the Gentiles, (who had been beggars, in the estimation of the Jews) would receive the gospel, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the gospel kingdom ; and that the Jews would be cast into outer darkness, and suffer the consequences of their obstinacy.

Dr. Lightfoot says,—‘The main scope and design of the parable, seems to be this,—to hint the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, who, though they had Moses and the prophets, did not believe them—nay, would not believe, though one (even Jesus) arose from the dead. For that conclusion of the parable abundantly evidenceth what it aimed at : *if they hear not Moses and the prophets,*’ &c.*

VI. We come to show that commentators of different sects, and of very high authority, have given the same interpretation of this parable.

* Works, xii. 158.

Theophylact, from whose Commentary on the Four Gospels the following extract was made, lived in the eleventh century, and was Metropolitan of Bulgaria.

'In the preceding verses, our Lord had taught us to conduct ourselves properly with regard to our riches ; and to the same purpose, he adds, by way of example, this parable. For this is a parable, and not, as some have thought, a history ; because that the blessings of eternity were not yet adjudged to the righteous, nor the judgments to the wicked. But the Lord spake figuratively, designing to teach the unmerciful what was at length to come upon them, and on the other hand, to assure the afflicted how happy they are to become, for the evils they here sustain.' Accordingly, Theophylact proceeds to apply this parable, as a representation of the different conditions of the proud sinner and of the humble saint, after the general judgment ; and he incidentally reasons from the parable, against Origin's doctrine of the restoration, because Abraham says, 'that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.'

At last, however, Theophylact says, 'But this parable can also be explained in the way of allegory ; so that we may say that by the rich man is signified the Jewish people. For they were formerly rich, abounding in all divine knowledge, wisdom and instruction, which are more excellent than gold and precious stones. And they were arrayed in purple and fine linen, as they possessed a kingdom, and a priesthood, and were themselves a royal priesthood to God. The purple denoted their kingdom ; and the fine linen, their priesthood. For the Levites were clothed in sacerdotal vestments of fine linen ; and they fed sumptuously and lived splendidly, every day. Daily did they offer the morning and the evening sacrifice ; which they also called the continual sacrifice. But Lazarus was the Gentile people ; poor in divine grace and wisdom, and lying before the gates : for it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter the house itself, because they were considered a pollution. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles, we read that it was alleged against Paul that he had introduced Gentiles

into the temple, and made that holy place common or unclean. Moreover, those people were full of fetid sores of sin, on which the impudent dogs, or devils, fed, who delight themselves in our sores. The Gentiles likewise desired even the crumbs which fell from the tables of the rich ; for they were wholly destitute of that bread which strengthens the heart of man, and wanted even the smallest morsel of food ; so that the Canaanite woman, (Matt. xv. 27,) when she was a heathen, desired to be fed with the crumbs. In short the Hebrew people were dead unto God, and their bones, which could not be moved to do good, were perished. Lazarus also, I mean the Gentile people, were dead in sin. And the envious Jews who were dead in sins, did actually burn in a flame of jealousy, as saith the apostle, on account of the Gentiles being received into the faith, and because that those who had before been a poor and despised Gentile race, were now in the bosom of Abraham, the father of nations. And justly, indeed, were they thus revived. For it was while Abraham was yet a Gentile, that he believed God, and turned from the worship of idols to the knowledge of God. Therefore, it was proper that they who were partakers of his conversion and faith, should rest in his bosom, sharing the same final lot, the same habitation and the same blessedness. And the Jewish people longed for one drop of the former legal sprinklings and purifications to refresh their tongue, that they might confidently say to us that the Law was still efficacious and availing. But it was not. For the Law was only until John. And the Psalmist says, Sacrifice and oblations thou wouldest not, &c.'

Theophylact then briefly observes, that we ought to make a moral use of this parable, and not despise our servants who stand at our gates.*

We give another extract from an English divine. 'We will suppose, then, *the rich man who fared so sumptuously*, to be the Jew ; so amply enriched with the heavenly

* Theophylacti in Quatuor Evangelia Enarrationes, p. 119. Edit. Basil, 1525.

treasure of divine revelation. *The poor beggar, who lay at his gate*, in so miserable a plight, was the poor Gentile ; now reduced to the last degree of want in regard to religious knowledge. *The crumbs which fell from the rich man's table*, and which the beggar was *so desirous of picking up*, were such fragments of patriarchal and Jewish traditions as their travelling philosophers were able to pick up, with their utmost care and diligence. And those philosophers were also *the dogs that licked the sores* of heathenism, and endeavored to supply the wants of divine revelation, by such schemes and hypotheses concerning the nature of the gods, and the obligation of moral duties, as (due allowance for their ignorance and frailties) did no small honor to human nature, and yet thereby plainly showed, how little a way unassisted reason could go, without some supernatural help,—as one of the wisest of them frankly confessed. About one and the same time, *the beggar dies, and is carried by the angels* (i.e. God's spiritual messengers to mankind) *into Abraham's bosom*; that is, he is engrafted into the church of God. *And the rich man also dies, and is buried*. He dies what we call a political death. His dispensation ceases. He is rejected from being any longer the peculiar son of God. The people whom he parabolically represents, are miserably destroyed by the Romans, and the wretched remains of them driven into exile over the face of the earth ; mere vagabonds, with a kind of mark set upon them, like Cain, their prototype, for a like crime ; and which mark may perhaps be their adherence to the law. Whereby it came amazingly to pass, that these people, though dispersed, yet still dwell alone and separate ; *not being reckoned among the nations*, as Balaam foretold. The rich man being reduced to this state of misery, complains bitterly of his hard fate : but is told by Abraham, that he slipped his opportunity, while Lazarus laid hold on his, and now receives the comfort of it. The Jew complains of the want of more evidence, to convince his countrymen, the five brethren ; and would fain have Lazarus sent from the dead to convert them. But Abraham tells him, *that if their own*

scriptures cannot convince them of their error, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And exactly so it proved in the event. For, this parable was delivered towards the end of the third year of our Lord's ministry ; and in the fourth, or following year of it, the words put into the mouth of Abraham, as the conclusion of the parable, are most literally verified, by our Lord's raising another Lazarus from the dead. And we may presume that the beggar had the fictitious name of Lazarus given him in the parable, not without some reason, since the supposed request of the rich man was fully answered, by our Lord's raising another, and a real Lazarus from the dead. But what was the consequence ? Did this *notorious* miracle convince the rich man's brethren ? No, truly. His visit to them from the dead, was so far from convincing them, that they actually *consulted together, that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus.* So much for the true sense of this parable.*

Dr. Gill makes a two-fold application of this parable, through the whole of it. He understands by the *rich man*, 'the Jews in general,' and by the *beggar*, 'our Lord Jesus Christ himself.' The death and torment of the rich man, he says may mean either the natural death of the Jews, and their torment after death, or certain temporal calamities may be intended. I shall quote a few extracts, in regard to the latter meaning which he assigns to this parable:

'*The rich man died :* It may also be understood of the political and ecclesiastical death of the Jewish people, which lay in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and in the abolition of the temple worship, and of the whole ceremonial law ; a *Loammi* was written upon their church-state, and the covenant between God and them was broken ; the gospel was removed from them, which was as death,—as the return of it, and their

* See a Rationale of the Literal Doctrine of Original Sin, &c. By James Bate, M. A., Rector of Deptford.

call by it, will be as life from the dead ; as well their place and nation, their civil power and authority were taken away from them by the Romans, and a death of afflictions, by captivity and calamities of every kind, have attended them ever since.'

'In hell—in torments: This may regard the vengeance of God on the Jews, at the destruction of Jerusalem, when a fire was kindled against their land, and burned to the lowest hell, and consumed the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains ; and the whole land became brimstone, salt, and burning ; and they were rooted out of it in anger, wrath, and great indignation ; (see Deut. xxix. 23, 27, 28 ; xxxii. 22,) or rather the dreadful calamities which came upon them in the time of Adrian, at Bither ; when their false messiah, Bar Cochab, was taken and slain, and such multitudes of them were destroyed, in the most miserable manner ; when that people, who before had their eyes darkened, and a spirit of slumber and stupidity fallen upon them, in those calamities began to be under some convictions.' *

VII. We proceed to notice some objections which have been urged against this interpretation.

1. It is objected, that the death of Lazarus and the rich man are interpreted in opposite senses,—in the one case, it being made to mean entering into a state of happiness, and in the other, entering into a state of misery. Reply.—Death represents the *great change* which took place in the circumstances of both Jews and Gentiles, and we see no more impropriety in its representing *the change* in the one case than in the other. The same objection might be made to the language of Paul, who uses *death* as a figure in two senses. ‘ You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.’ (Eph. ii. 1.) Again, ‘ How shall we that are *dead* to sin live any longer therein ? ’ (Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 5.) Moreover, is not this objection equally forcible against the usual interpretation ? If the rich man passed out of this world into an endless hell, and Lazarus passed out of this world into an endless heaven,

* Expos. in loc. Paige's Select. 159, 160

how shall death represent the change in both these cases, if the objection we are now considering be valid ?

2. It is objected, that our interpretation represents the Jews as acknowledging that the christianized Gentiles were in possession of the faith of Abraham, which is contrary to fact, for they never have acknowledged it. Reply. Will not this objection lie with equal force against the words of Christ ? ‘ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they [the Gentiles] shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.’ (Luke xiii. 28, 29.) The kingdom of God, here, as Dr. Whitby tells us, does not refer to future happiness, but to the reign of Christ on earth. It seems then that this objection lies with equal force against the words of Christ ; and we are not therefore under obligation to pay any further attention to it. It may be remarked, however, that this objection does not lie against the *main design* of the parable as we have explained it, but merely against one of the *circumstances*, on which no stress ought to be laid. Archbishop Tillotson says, ‘ It is a known rule among all divines, that no certain argument can be drawn from the *circumstances* of a parable, but only from the *main scope* and intention of it.’ Prof. Stuart remarks, ‘ *Comparison is not to be extended to all the circumstances of the allegory.* Thus in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the point to be illustrated is *the extent of the duty of beneficence.* Most of the circumstances in the parable go to make up merely the verisimilitude of the narration, so that it may give pleasure to him who hears or reads it.’ * Ernesti says, ‘ We must guard against urging too far the meaning of all parts of a parabolical narration, and refer the particular parts to the general design, so that all may be accommodated to it. It is a very common fault of interpreters to

* Elements of Interpretation by Ernesti, translated by Prof. Stuart, p. 80.

urge the explanation *too far*; but it is a very great fault.' In regard to this, Prof. Stuart says, 'The caution suggested by Ernesti against interpreting all the minute circumstances of a parable so as to give them a mystic significancy, is very important.* Chrysostom, as quoted by Benson, in his Life of Christ, says, 'We ought not to lay too much stress upon single words and phrases. But, when we have learned the *scope* and *design* of the parable, we need not be anxious about anything but the moral or useful instruction, principally intended thereby.' † If the interpretation we have given does not agree with the main scope and design of the parable, let it be rejected; but if it agrees with the main scope and design, we do not feel under obligation to find a meaning for every minor phrase and circumstance.

3. It is objected, that the explanation here given would prove that the conversion of a Jew would be an impossibility, since the rich man could not pass the gulf. Reply.—The Jews as a nation did reject Christianity; they were the most obstinate opposers of Christ; and at the coming of Christ to destroy the nation, they *could not* avail themselves of the blessings of the gospel. To this import are the words of Christ: 'Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, *and shall not be able.*' (See Luke xiii. 24—27.) This circumstance fully justifies the figure of the gulf. When we are told that Jews at different times have embraced Christianity, it does not touch this case at all. The proper question is, Did not the obstinacy of the Jews, and the impossibility of their embracing Christianity when the divine judgments fell upon them, justify fully the figure of the gulf?

4. Again, it has been said, that our interpretation makes the unbelieving Jews petition for the light and consolations enjoyed by the Christian: for the rich man cries, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he

* Elements of Interpretation, by Ernesti, p. 82.

† See the Introduction to this work, sec. 4, under general rules for explanation of Parables. This rule is well laid down in Hudson's Letters to Ballou, p. 210, to which I refer the reader.

may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' This is contrary to well-known fact. The Jews have never implored, that the hated followers of the despised Nazarene should be sent to impart the gospel to them. Reply—Here is another straining on a mere circumstance of the imagery. The request of the rich man that Lazarus might be sent to him with a drop of water, is merely thrown into the parable to show the intensity of his torment : it does not belong to the main scope and design. Of what weight, then, is the objection we are now considering ? Suppose we should undertake to maintain the invocation of saints, because the rich man prayed to Father Abraham ; there would be as much propriety in such a use of the parable, as there is in the objection last stated.

5. It is objected, that if the death of Lazarus typifies the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Abraham, his resurrection would represent his return again to Paganism ; so that the rich man must have requested that Lazarus might turn Pagan, in order to go and preach Christianity to the Jews. Reply.—There is as much force in this objection, as if it was said, there is no existence for man in another world ; for if death carries men out of this world, the resurrection must bring them back into it again, and therefore there is no other world. Again, it may be said, the different colors of the human skin, and all our national peculiarities, shall exist in the future state. How so ? Because, if death throws off these distinctions, the resurrection will certainly cause us to resume them again ; and, therefore, they will be perpetuated eternally. This objection, too, is founded on the very principle that Professor Stuart condemns so pointedly, viz. mistifying every particular of the imagery.

6. It is said, this exposition gives no consistent account of the *five brethren*. Who do they represent, if the rich man is an emblem of the Jewish nation ? Reply.—So doubtless it might be asked with equal wisdom, And what does the finger of Lazarus, and the tongue of the rich man represent ? One of the principal objects of this parable, is to show the obstinacy of the Jews in rejecting

Christ. To lead to that fact, the rich man, in the arrangement of the figure, is represented as saying he had five brethren, and praying that some one might be sent to instruct them. This was designed to give occasion to the remark, ‘If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.’ As though Christ had said plainly, If you Jews will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will you believe if I rise from the dead. Suppose an individual should seriously press the question, what do the thieves, and the priest and Levite, and the oil and wine, signify in the parable of the Good Samaritan? We should tell him, They do not signify anything; they are the dress of the parable,—the verisimilitude of the narration, as Professor Stuart would express it. We should say, get at the main fact intended to be illustrated in that parable, and let smaller matters alone. It was said of our Saviour, that he should come *as a thief in the night*, i. e. that he should come unexpectedly. This is as far as we can carry the similitude; and we should think the man crazy who should proceed to infer, that he would come to steal and to rob.

7. It may be objected, that the people to whom this parable was spoken, would understand Christ as teaching the doctrine of punishment in hades, after death; and if he did not intend to teach them that doctrine, he deceived them. In reply, it is sufficient to observe that there is not a particle of proof, in all the New Testament, that the Jews ever understood Christ to teach that doctrine. They accused him of being ‘the friend of publicans and sinners,’ but they never alleged that he sentenced sinners to torment in hades. Moreover, would the Jews be more likely to suppose that Jesus intended to adopt their notions of punishment in hades, than their other notions concerning hades, which are referred to in the parable? Certainly not; but no one supposes Jesus intended to approve of all their wild chimeras touching hades! If the Jews knew the views of the Saviour concerning the resurrection, as they probably did, they could not have supposed him to teach the doctrine of punishment in hades,

after death. And why should the Jews be more likely to understand Christ as teaching this doctrine, than the apostles? The apostles certainly did not so understand Christ; or, if they did, they were the most unfaithful of all men, for not one of them has spoken of punishment in hades. If such an instance can be found, let it be brought forward, for we have never been able to find it ourselves. The objection we are now considering should be withheld, until some proof is brought forward from the teachings of the apostles, that they understood Christ as intending to teach that *hades* was a place of punishment after death. If it can be proved that the apostles so understood Christ, we will give up the point. They never asserted the supposed fact themselves; and why should they not have asserted it, if they had believed it. If it be said they have asserted it, let the place be pointed out.

We have now brought the protracted examination of this parable to a close; and we commend what we have said to the serious and unprejudiced attention of the reader. Let his sole inquiry be,—‘What is truth?’ Let not an attachment to long-cherished opinions sway his mind; and may diligent inquiry—prayerful study—crowned with the blessing of heaven, guide him to know the design of Jesus, in the parable we have considered.

PARABLE OF THE UNJUST JUDGE.

Luke xviii. 2—5.

'There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but, afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, Yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'

DR. CAMPBELL remarks, on ver. 1 of this chapter, that 'the words are a continuation of the discourse, related in the preceding chapter, which is here rather inopportune interrupted, by the divisions into chapters.' Jesus had been relating the persecutions his disciples must suffer, and the troubles in which the whole land of Judea would be involved, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This event was truly desirable to them, as it would free them from the persecutions of the Jews, their bitterest enemies. The disciples knew full well that this event would happen, according to the predictions of their Lord ; but, as several years were to elapse before it would transpire, they would grow impatient and desponding. This parable, therefore, is spoken to them. 'And he spake a parable unto *them*,' i. e. the disciples. His object in speaking the parable is plainly stated in ver. 1, viz. to show 'that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.'

The duty of great frequency of prayer, is inculcated in other parts of the Scriptures. In Rom. xii. 12, the Christians are urged to continue instant in prayer. So in Luke xxi. 36, 'Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man,' meaning at his coming to destroy the Jewish state. The habit of the Christians in frequent prayer, is referred

to, Acts xii. 5. ‘Peter therefore was kept in prison ; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.’ (1 Thess. v. 17.) ‘Pray without ceasing.’ (Col. iv. 2.) ‘Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.’ All these expressions mean only great frequency in prayer.

‘*And not to faint.*’ Here Jesus designs to show his followers, that there was danger of their becoming impatient and weary, under the persecutions they suffered, and that they would suppose that he delayed his coming. In agreement with this, we find they did repine that the coming of Jesus did not take place so soon as they expected, Paul bids the Corinthians ‘wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ (1 Cor. i. 7.) Jesus, in describing the persecutions his disciples would suffer, bids them in *patience* to possess their souls. (Luke xxi. 19.) Paul says to the Thessalonians, ‘The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting* for Christ.’ (2 Thess. iii. 5.) It is said to the Hebrews, ‘Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.’ (Heb. x. 36, 37.) To the same purport is the advice given by James. ‘Be *patient* therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient ; establish your hearts ; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.’ (James v. 7, 8.) Jesus foresaw that his disciples would very naturally become discouraged and faint ; and he uttered the parable before us to show, ‘that men ought always to pray and not to faint.’

‘There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man ;’ i. e. these circumstances were conjectured ; as though the Saviour had said, We will suppose there was in a certain city such a judge. He ascribes to him a highly daring character ; ‘He feared not God, neither regarded man.’ ‘And there was a widow in that

city ; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.' The word here rendered avenge, would more properly be translated in this place, *do me justice*, that is against my adversary. The judge, not being moved by any motives of compassion or faithfulness, delayed to grant her request ; ' But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, [obtain for her justice,] lest by her continual coming she weary me.' Such was his motive ; not to do good to the afflicted and oppressed, but to escape trouble ; for this reason he granted her request, and gave her case adjudication. Here the parable ends ; and the Saviour, in the next place, proceeds to make the application, for the purpose of infusing encouragement into his disciples, and showing them 'that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.'

' Hear what the unjust judge saith ; ' i. e. consider this case, meditate upon it. The design of Jesus was not to represent God as an unjust judge, who grants favors to men only at their earnest entreaties. The argument was this : If this unjust judge would do justice to a woman in answer to her importunity, how reasonable is it to suppose that God will see justice done to his own elect, from the benevolence and rectitude of his own nature. ' There is no resemblance, except in the single point of office, between him and Deity, whom he represents ; and it is only when the account of him is taken as a whole, that it conveys the purport intended. The force of the parable is this : that since even an unjust judge, when wearied with continued entreaties for justice, will deliver the innocent from injury, we may expect with far greater reason, that the perfectly just judge of all, will grant the constant prayers of men whom he loves, how long soever their relief be delayed.'* Let the following extract suffice on this point. ' The sum and scope of this place is to encourage us to fervency and constancy in prayer ; by an argument from the lesser to the greater : if the unrighteous judge, who neither fear-

* See Storr's Dissertation on the Parables of Christ.

ed God nor reverenced man, was intreated by the importunity of the widow to do justice to her whom he regarded not ; how much more will God be entreated to relieve his dear children whom he so loved, that he gave his only Son to death for them.*

This mode of reasoning was common with Jesus. We find an instance of it in the Sermon on the Mount, when he was endeavoring to inspire men with confidence in God, assuring them that, if they asked, they should receive ; ‘For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.’ (Matt. vii. 8.) Then comes the argument : ‘What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?’ (Vers. 9, 10.) There is no such father on earth. Well, if imperfect and sinful men are so ready to give favors to their children, how much more ready is God to bestow blessings on those who ask him ? Or, to give the argument in the language of the evangelist, ‘If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to those who ask him ?’ (Ver. 11.) If then the unjust judge heeded the importunity of the widow, how much more reasonable was it to suppose, that God would ‘avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.’ (Luke viii. 7.) The elect, here spoken of, were the early Christians, who are often called the elect in the scriptures. Hence it is said, that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus would gather ‘*his elect* from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.’ (Matt. xxiv. 31. See, also, Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27.) These elect God would avenge, he would see justice done to them, although he bore long with them : i. e. delayed it for some time. ‘I tell you,’ says Jesus, in closing the application of the parable, ‘that he will avenge them speedily :’ to which Archbishop Newcome adds, by way of explanation, ‘By bringing the

* Assembly’s Annotations.

Roman armies upon the Jews, their persecutors.* And it is rendered more certain, that the true application of the passage is to the destruction of Jerusalem, by the questions which Jesus asks, as follows : ‘ Nevertheless, when the *Son of man cometh*, shall he find faith on the earth?’ or *in the land* [of Judea] as some translate the passage. Whitby remarks here, ‘ When the Son of man comes to exercise this vengeance on the Jewish nation, how few shall he find in the Jewish nation that will believe it ? As for the unbelieving Jews, though Christ and his forerunner had told them so frequently and plainly of their approaching ruin ; and though they had so many signs of it recorded in Josephus, he tells us they were still expecting deliverance from God. And they among them who believed and professed the Christian faith, being pressed with continual sufferings, began to grow weary and faint in their minds, and ask, *Where is the promise of his coming?* Yea, some of them began to forsake the assembling of the saints, (Heb. x. 25,) and many of them became apostates, and fell back to their old Judaism ; so that all the epistles directed to them, are manifestly designed to keep them steadfast in the faith.’† Matthew represents Jesus as saying, that on account of the afflictions which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, many should be offended, and the love of many should wax cold. At the time of Christ’s coming, he found but little faith on the earth. This coming of Christ, it should be remembered, was not his personal appearance, but his gracious interposition in favor of his followers, and for the destruction of his enemies.

* Observations, p. 157. ‘*A les venger.*] Par la destruction de la nation Judaique.’ Beaus. et L’En. So, also, Whitby, Hammond, and others.

† Par. and Annot on the place.

**PARABLE OF THE
PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.**

Luke xviii. 10—14.

‘Two men went up into the temple to pray ; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other : for every one that exaltheh himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.’

THIS passage is called, by the evangelist, a parable, although it partakes but little of the character of a parable, being rather a literal relation of the supposed conduct of the Pharisees and publicans. The object in stating it is explained in ver. 9: ‘And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.’ There was a remarkable consistency in the characters of these men ; for nothing could be more reasonably expected, than that those should despise others, who had a vain conceit of their own goodness. Jesus designed to pourtray the real character of the Pharisees, to contrast them with such as they regarded as sinners, and to show that God approved the latter in preference to themselves.

‘Two men went up into the temple to pray.’ This is a supposed case—not a real one. The temple at Jerusalem was the place where prayers were offered. One of these men was a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisees were a very numerous and influential sect among the Jews. They were the principal opposers of Jesus Christ, who rebuked them with great severity, and pointed

out their vices in a fearless and faithful manner. Although they were supposed by the common people to possess great sanctity, they were grossly hypocritical, and vain ; and they did the greater part of their religious acts to be seen of men. This was their greatest fault. They loved the praise of men, and affected a righteousness they did not possess to obtain it. See Matt. chapters vi. and xxiii. for a full account of their characters. Many of them probably supposed themselves to be truly righteous, like those mentioned in ver. 9, ‘who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.’ The publicans, as we have shown in another place, were those who collected the public taxes. They were the objects of universal abhorrence among the Jews, and were supposed frequently to be guilty of great extortion in their exactions from the people. The Jews could not, without the greatest reluctance, see publicans exacting tributes and impositions laid on them by foreigners, the Romans : especially the Galileans or Herodians, the disciples of Judas the Gaulonite, submitted to this with the greatest impatience, and thought it even unlawful. Those of their own nation who undertook this employ, they looked on as heathen : ‘Let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican.’ (Matt. xviii. 17.) It is said they would not even allow them to enter the temple, or synagogues ; to partake of the public prayers, offices of judicature, or to give testimony in a court of justice.*

These were the characters of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee *stood by himself* ; not stood and prayed by himself, as it is in the common version. Dr. Campbell renders the expression, ‘the Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus.’ This is in perfect agreement with the character of a Pharisee. He was afraid of being polluted by the touch of the publican ; and for this reason, the Jews performed their frequent washings when they came from the markets, and other places of public resort. (Mark vii. 4.) They objected strongly to

* Calmet’s Dic. Art. Publicans. Grotius on Matt. xviii. Lightfoot, Works, xi. 130.

Jesus, who eat and drank with publicans and sinners, undoubtedly supposing that from a respect to his character, he ought to have declined their company. The sense we have put on the phrase here, is justified by ver. 13, where we read, that the publican *stood afar off*. He was probably aware of the objections which the Pharisees felt against the publicans entering the temple.

Let us observe the prayer of the Pharisee, which, in fact, is not a prayer at all, but merely a declaration of his own goodness. Instead of praying, he boasted. In the first place, he mentioned those sins of which he said he was not guilty : ‘ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers.’ Here the spirit of the Pharisee is fully displayed. He could not think of the publican, without drawing an invidious contrast between his supposed faults, and his own righteousness. For in these words, ‘extortioners, unjust,’ he evidently alluded to the well-known character of the publicans for extortion and injustice ; and then he immediately adds, ‘or even as this publican.’ Now, whether the Pharisee was not guilty of these sins, must depend solely on his own testimony ; as no one else hath ever assured us of the truth of it. From the description of the Pharisees which Jesus gave, we should conclude they were guilty of the highest rapacity and injustice, since he distinctly charges them with devouring widows’ houses, and binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laying them on men’s shoulders. This was their real character ; but the Pharisee in the parable, like all other Pharisees, while he could see the failings of others with the keenest vision, could not see his own. ‘ Hypocrisy is blind at home, and too quick-sighted abroad.’ *

We will now listen to his positive description of himself, and see what virtues he has actually performed. Hark ! ‘ I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’ His prayer, if such it can be called, is ended, and these were the virtues he punctilioiusly performed.

* Assembly’s Annot. on the place.

Did he say, Lord, I love my neighbor as myself—I do unto others as I would have them do unto me—I am kind to the distressed and unfortunate? No; the virtues of benevolence were not very precious in his sight. Here was the difference between the religion of the Pharisees and the religion of Christ. Their religion was a mere round of rites and ceremonies. Mankind were not happier for it—it did not relieve the distressed; while the religion of Christ was designed to promote ‘peace on earth, and good will towards men.’ The Pharisee unquestionably mentioned what he thought were his best acts; and what were they? Fasting twice in the week, and paying tithes. In these, and other frivolous things, the Pharisees were very punctilious; but they fasted to be seen of men, (Matt. vi. 16,) and paid tithes that they might omit the weightier matters of the law, ‘justice, mercy and faith,’ (Matt. xxiii. 23.) Their days of fasting were the second and fifth of every week, corresponding to our Mondays and Thursdays.

Let us turn now to the publican. He did not boast, nor think himself better than other men. He ‘would not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*’ What a contrast! a contrast which heightens the vanity and ostentation of the Pharisee. In the publican, we see a pattern of true humility. Respectful to the feelings of the Pharisee, who he knew would not permit his approach, he stood afar off. His was a real prayer. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ As though he had said, ‘Gracious God, I stand in need of thy mercy. I pray for a sinner, that mercy may be granted him. I am that sinner, O God, be merciful to me. I pray for the forgiveness of my own offences.’

Such were the characters of the Pharisee and publican; and now it is an important question, Which was justified in the sight of God? Men generally would have supposed the Pharisee to possess the most religion, who declared so solemnly before God, that he was not like other men, that he did not commit extortion, nor injustice; but fasted twice in the week, and parted freely of his substance for

the support of religion. But Jesus, who knew men's hearts, said of the publican, 'This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.' (Ver. 14.)

It is evident that Jesus, in this parable, intended to present what men generally regarded as purest holiness on the one hand, and extreme wickedness on the other. The Pharisees were regarded as the most holy people on earth, and the publicans as the most wicked. The object of the parable before us was to show that the religion of the Pharisees was a mere observance of rites and ceremonies, which indeed obtained for them the praise of men, but not the praise of God, for they were destitute of the spirit of pure religion ; while the publican, whom every body despised, sensible of his sins, and crying for mercy, was justified rather than the ostentatious, self-conceited Pharisee. The moral deduced from the parable, is this : 'For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' (Ver. 14.) Those who are proud, who, in their own estimation, are above others, who assume a rank in society to which their virtues do not entitle them, must be abased ; 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.' (Prov. xvi. 18.) But they who are truly humble, who are sensible of their sins, who feel their utter dependence upon God, and cry unto him for mercy, shall be exalted. Pure and undefiled religion is benevolence and humility of heart, and uprightness of conduct. Those who possess this, even though they neglect what the world miscalls religion, will be justified in the sight of God. In the parable, the distinction is clearly made between spurious and true worship ; and the disposition ascribed to the publican, is worthy of being imbibed by all mankind.

**PARABLE OF THE
LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.**

Matt. xx. 1—15.

‘For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. Again, he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house. Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny: take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?’

THIS parable was designed unquestionably to illustrate what is said at the close of chap. xix. viz., ‘Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’ Dr. Campbell remarks that the particle γα with which the parable commences, ‘shows manifestly that what follows was spoken in illustration of the sentence with which the preceding chapter concludes, and which, therefore, ought not to have been disjoined from this parable.’* The whole

* Note on the place.

conexion belonging to the parable, extends from chap. xix. 16, to xx. 16, which might properly have been made a chapter by itself.

The kingdom of heaven is here put for the laws and institutions of that kingdom. The dealings of God with men in that kingdom, are like the conduct of a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. He agreed with several for a penny a day, and sent them into his vineyard. This would be thought a very small compensation for a day's labor. It should be remembered, that the piece of money here referred to was Roman coin, about the value of *fourteen cents*. This was the ordinary price of a day's labor at that time. (See *Job* v. 14.) Adam Clarke remarks, that 'in 1531 the price of labor was regulated in England by Parliament; and it is remarkable, that corn-weeders and hay-makers, without meat, drink, or other courtesy demanded, were to have *one penny* per day. In 1314 the pay of a chaplain to the Scotch Bishops was three half pence per day.'* That a penny should not be understood in this case to signify what we usually mean by the term, seems further evident from Luke x. 35, where the kind Samaritan is said to have given *two pence* to the host with whom he left the wounded Jew in charge, which would have been too trivial to have been offered, if it amounted to no more than three cents. It was about ten times that sum. So it is said, (Rev. vi. 6,) 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny;' which Calmet remarks, although it indicates great plenty to an English reader, 'is really descriptive of a most distressing scarcity,'† that sum being a large amount for those articles. A penny a day, even supposing it to amount to fourteen cents, would have been miserable wages, had not every thing been proportionably cheap.

The householder went out again about the third hour,

* See Fleetwood's *Chronicon Precios*, pp. 123, 129. Clarke's Com. on the place.

† Robinson's Calmet, Art. *Penny*.

and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and he sent them into his vineyard, with the assurance that whatever was right he would give them. ‘The Jews computed their hours of the civil day from six in the morning until six in the evening; thus their *first* hour corresponded with our *seven* o’clock, their *second* to our *eight*, their *third* to our *nine*, &c.’* The householder went out about the sixth and ninth hours, and sent others into the vineyard. Again, about the eleventh hour, [five o’clock in the afternoon,] he went out, [into the market-place, see ver. 3]; and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here *all the day* idle? The reason they assigned was, Because no man hath hired us. He sent them into his vineyard, with the promise that what was right he would pay. It seems to have been the custom for laborers, to go early in the morning to the market, and stand there until hired; and the customary hours of working were from six in the morning until six in the evening.†

We shall now turn from this notice of the customs on which the parable was founded, to seek the proper application of it. We have already stated, that the whole subject connected with this parable, extends from chapter xix. 16 to xx. 16, which might properly have formed a chapter by itself. A young man, a Jew of course came to Jesus with

* Horne’s Intro. iii. 161.

† This custom remains to this day in Persia. In the city of Hamadan there is a maidan, or square, in front of a large mosque. ‘Here,’ says Mr. Morier, ‘we observed every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed us, to be hired by the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom, which I have never seen in any other part of Asia, forcibly struck me as a most happy illustration of our Saviour’s parable of the laborers in the vineyard in the 20th chapter of Matthew, particularly, when passing by the same place late in the day, we still found others standing idle, and remembered his words, *why stand ye here all the day idle?* as most applicable to their situation: for in putting the very same question to them, they answered us, *because no one hath hired us.*’ Morier’s second Journey through Persia, p. 265.

This circumstance of people collecting in such numbers in the market-place, will add force to the language of the sacred writers, in Matt. xi. 16, and Acts xvii. 17.

the question, ‘Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’ (xix. 16.) Jesus answered him in substance, that he must keep the law. His reply was, ‘All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?’ (Ver. 20.) In reply Jesus told him, to sell all that he had, and give to the poor. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Ver. 22.) This drew from the Saviour the following remark: ‘A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ (Vers. 23, 24.) This similitude, drawn in the strong eastern manner, was designed to show the extreme difficulty with which the rich in this world’s goods, were persuaded to leave their possessions, and become poor and enter the kingdom of Christ, and become his followers. The young man had just afforded an instance of the truth of the remark; and as to become a follower of Christ, in that persecuting age, required a sacrifice of all earthly considerations, so, of course, it would be more difficult for the rich, who were bound to the earth by a thousand ties, to get released from its influences, than the poor. When his disciples heard his remark, concerning the difficulty with which the rich would enter his kingdom, they expressed their surprise by saying, ‘Who then shall be saved?’ We have already given the sense of this phrase, pp. 156, 157. Jesus intimated that even such would be converted; for although with men this was impossible, ‘With God all things are possible.’ (Ver. 26.)

Peter, who had listened to all his Master had said to the young man, particularly to that part which required him to be willing to part with all his earthly possessions, now breaks out in an expression of his own feelings, and shows what thoughts were predominant in his own mind: ‘Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee what shall we have therefore?’ (ver. 27.) As though he had said, ‘Lord we have obeyed thy commands; we have given up all we had on earth, and followed thee; and now what reward are we to have?’ A question of a similar nature was

asked by some of the disciples on another occasion : ‘ Who is *the greatest* in the kingdom of heaven ? ’ (Matt. xviii. 1 ; xx. 20 : Luke xxii. 24.) The answer of Jesus to Peter’s question was as follows : ‘ Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel ; ’ (Ver. 28.) i. e. in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye which have followed me shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel—a figurative expression to denote that the apostles would be raised to stations of eminence in the church, at the coming of Christ.* Furthermore, Jesus said to Peter, ‘ And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.’ (Ver. 29.) The meaning of the expression ‘ to enter into *life*,’ we have already fully explained. (See, particularly, pp. 55, 57, 68, 69, of this work.) *Everlasting life* was that state of peace and rest into which the believers of the gospel entered, and which the church of Christ pre-eminently enjoyed, when delivered from her persecutors at the coming of Christ to destroy the Jewish nation ; and this is called, in our version, *everlasting life*, from the Greek phrase, *εαυτον αειναι*, which is generally, if not invariably, applied to the time of the gospel dispensation. (See our remarks on Matt. xxv. 46, under the parable of the Sheep and Goats, and compare also the following passages of Scripture : John v. 24 ; vi. 47, 54 ; xvii. 3 ; Rom. vi. 22 ; 1 John v. 13.) In pursuing the context, we have now brought ourselves to the last verse of chap. xix., as follows : ‘ But many that are first shall be last ; and the last shall be first.’

These words, last quoted, were called for by the case of the young Jew, mentioned xix. 16. He furnished an instance of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews ;

* See Dr. Campbell’s note on the place.

and gave occasion to the Saviour to speak of the fact, that the Jews, to whom the gospel had been *first* preached, and who had holden the *first* rank among all the nations of the earth, in regard to religious privileges, would be the *last* to embrace the gospel ; and the Gentiles, to whom the gospel was *last* preached, would be the *first* to embrace it. So, in the parable of the Supper, those who were *first* bidden, did not embrace the opportunity ; while those who were bidden *last*, accepted the invitation, and entered into the kingdom of God. This appears to be the application of the proverb, ‘ Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’ The parable before us was designed to illustrate the facts here stated ; and this is rendered more evident from the circumstance, that immediately on closing the parable, Jesus adds, ‘ So the last shall be first, and the first last,’ (ver. 16,) as he had shown in the parable. Dr. Whitby has illustrated this point at some considerable length, and we beg permission to lay his views before the reader. ‘ The import of this parable seems to be this, that the Jews, who were first called to be God’s people, and to whom the gospel was first preached, and the blessings of the Messiah were first offered, shall be, for their unbelief, rejected from being God’s people, and so shall be the last in God’s esteem, and shall only be made partakers of these blessings at the last ; but the Gentiles, who, therefore, came not in before, because they were not called before, shall accept the gracious offer, and so become God’s church and people, and be preferred before the Jews, and first partake of the blessings of the gospel. So that they who gloried in the title of being the first born of God, and those who had served him so long, and therefore murmured that the Gentiles should be admitted to the same privileges and favor with them, and that without circumcision, or obedience to the law of Moses, and did on that account reject the gospel, shall themselves be neglected, and put last ; for, though many of them are called, both in Judea, and throughout their dispersions, yet few of them do, or will

accept that call, or embrace the Christian faith. That this is the true import of this passage, we learn,

1. From the connective particle, *γαρ, for*, which begins this chapter, and therefore shows this parable is designed to prove what was said in the last verse of the former chapter, and is repeated in the close of this parable, (ver. 16,) ‘that many which are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.’

2. And that this relates to the calling in of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews, is evident from these words: ‘There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last, which shall be first; and there are first, which shall be last.’ (Luke xiii. 28—30.) For, in these words Christ plainly shows that the gospel should be received by the Gentiles, dispersed through all parts of the earth, and they should become the seed of Abraham by faith, whilst the Jews should be excluded from that kingdom, and by this the last should be made first, and the first last; and the reason of this added, (ver. 16,) ‘*For many are called, but few chosen,*’ must respect the Jews. Moreover, that this parable cannot relate to the rewards of another world, is evident from this, that amongst them who receive those rewards, there can be no murmuring, as here against God, (ver. 11,) no evil eye, or envy, at the felicity of, or mercy showed to others. (Ver. 15.) But the very preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles was a great mystery. (Rom. xvi. 25, 26; Eph. iii. 4—6; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) For even the first believers preached only to the Jews, (Acts xi. 19.) St. Peter durst not do it till God, by a vision, told him that he should, (Acts x.,) and when he had done it, those of the circumcision condemned him for it, (Acts xi. 2, 3.) The unbelieving Jews could not hear it from St. Paul, without crying out, ‘Away with such a fellow; it is not fit that he should live,’ (Acts xxii. 21, 22,) and therefore they forbade the apostles to preach

to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, (1 Thess. ii. 16.) Yea, even the believing Jews murmured at their admission to the like privileges with them, without circumcision and the observance of the law of Moses, and made great schisms in all the churches of the Gentiles, upon that account; and the unbelieving Jews were enemies to the gospel for their sakes.*

After this full exposition of the parable from so eminent a commentator, it seems hardly necessary that any addition should be made to his remarks, except, it may be, to compress the design of them into a small compass.

1. The laborers who were first called to the vineyard were the Jews, who regarded themselves as peculiar objects of divine favor, and worthy of pre-eminent rewards, for their devotion and punctilioseiness in religion.

2. Those who were subsequently called to the vineyard were the Gentiles, to whom the gospel was last preached.

3. The kind attentions which Jesus bestowed on the ignorant and unhappy whom others despised—his efforts to bring them to the knowledge of the gospel, and especially the labors of the apostles to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, whom the Jews regarded as dogs, are represented by the impartiality of the lord of the vineyard, who gave to every man a penny; and the murmurs of those who were first called, at this benevolence of the lord of the vineyard, show the murmurings of the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, against Christ and his apostles.

The same disposition is frequently seen at the present day, in those persons who profess to be the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They boast that they serve God in this life, while others are engaged in the practice of sin; and they look forward to the time of *reckoning*, when they hope to be distinguished from others, and exalted above them. If we tell them that at last every man will receive a penny, or, in other words, that God will raise all men to equal bliss, they are angry; they murmur against those who preach such a doctrine, as the laborers murmured against the master of the house; they complain that they have

* Par. and Com. on Matt. xx. 1.

'borne the burden and heat of the day,' and maintain that they ought, therefore, to receive a greater reward than others in the world to come. They declare in substance, that if they are to have but one penny, others ought not to have so much; but if others are to receive that sum, they ought in all justice to receive more. *Equality* is one of the seven things which are an abomination to them; and like the murmuring laborers they cry out in indignation, 'Thou hast made them **EQUAL UNTO US.**' They claim an exclusive reward on the ground that they have wearied themselves to serve God; they have resisted the temptations and pleasures of sin, and wore the heavy yoke of obedience: they place their claim for a greater reward than others have, where the murmuring laborers put theirs, on the fact that they have 'borne the heat and burden of the day.' But the insufficiency of all their claims is very easily perceived. If they really loved God, and loved to serve him, they would not call his service a weariness, and a trouble; they would not represent the service of sin as easy and pleasant; but they would regard the duty of a Christian as Jesus regarded it, when he said, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' (Matt. xi. 30.) The enjoyments of religion and virtue would be to them the richest enjoyments they had on earth: and so far from claiming any other reward for walking in the path of wisdom, they would feel themselves laid under a *debt* of gratitude to God, for having guided their feet in the way of peace. This is the feeling of every true Christian. He finds an abundant reward in obedience itself—this is his joy, his crown, his heaven. The wicked to him are objects of pity, not of envy; and he prays, not that they may remain wicked and miserable forever, but that they may be converted, brought to the knowledge of the truth, and made holy and happy. He prays God to bless *the wicked*, for he sees that the good are sufficiently blessed in being made good.

Let us learn from the parable before us, to guard against the odious spirit of envy; to cultivate the meek and forgiving spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and to govern our actions by that rigid rule of impartiality, which distinguishes the divine administration.

PARABLE OF THE
SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK.

John x. 1—5.

'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door, into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.'

By perusing the parable of the Lost Sheep, it will be perceived that the imagery, in that instance, is borrowed from the circumstance of the sheep ranging through the wilderness, under the care of the shepherd, one of which is lost in the desert country, and is made the object of the shepherd's solicitude and search, until it is found and returned to the flock again. In the parable before us, they are contemplated as being in *folds*, i. e. enclosures, or pens. To these folds there was a door, under the care of a porter, and the sheep of different persons were mixed in the same fold. The true owner called them out, perhaps, by name, and they knew his voice, and followed him, as they had been learned to do. See the notes on the parable of the Lost Sheep.

Mention is made, (John v. 2,) of the 'sheep-market,' at Jerusalem, which might have been the place where the sheep brought to Jerusalem, were enclosed, for purposes of safety. Benson says, 'When Jesus was in Jerusalem, near the temple, where sheep were penned up, or kept in folds, to be sold for sacrifices, he spoke many things parabolically of the sheep, the true and good shepherd, and the door of the sheep-fold; and discovered that he spoke of

the sheep-folds which were to be hired in the market-place, by speaking of such folds as a thief could not enter by the door, nor the shepherd himself open ; but a porter opened the door.* This enables us to understand the terms of the parable. ‘ He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.’ (Ver. 1.) The true owner would have no occasion to climb up some other way, for the door would be open to him, on application to the porter. Hence it is said, ‘ He that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep,’ (ver. 2,) because none other was permitted to enter,—the porter would open the fold to none other. ‘ To him, i. e. to the shepherd to whom the sheep belonged, the porter openeth ; and the sheep hear his voice ; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him ; for they know his voice.’ (Vers. 3, 4.) The sheep in Judea, and in all the Eastern countries, were trained to know the shepherd, and to follow him ; to know his voice, and to obey his call : the sheep were named, and knew their names, as dogs and cattle do, sometimes, among us. With the voice of a stranger they were not acquainted, and would not follow him. ‘ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him ; for they know not the voice of strangers.’ (Ver. 5.) The figure which the Saviour here employed, was a common one with the Old Testament writers, as we have shown under another parable. The Jews, therefore, were accustomed to the use of it, and would not be surprised by it in the case before us. (See, particularly, Ezek. xxxiv., and Zech. xi.)

This parable was spoken to the Pharisees, as appears from chap. ix. 40, joined with x. 1, and 7. These Pharisees professed to be the teachers and guides of the people, and are sometimes called blind guides. The object of the parable seems to be threefold. *First*, to show

* Life of Christ, 418. Sir Isaac Newton took the same view of the subject, as will be seen by Adam Clarke’s Com. on John x. 3.

that the object of false teachers was not good. They did not seek the good of the sheep, but their own good, their own glory. *Second*, that Christ's object, and that of all faithful teachers, was the good of the flock, which he proved by the sacrifices he made for them. And, *third*, that although his flock at that time was 'a little flock,' it should be enlarged. He had other sheep, which were not then of his fold; them also would he gather in. There, then, would be no need of subordinate shepherds; for there should be one fold and one shepherd.

Those who entered not by the door of the fold, but climbed up some other way, were the false teachers, who came to be leaders of the people in an improper manner. Jesus says of them, 'All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.' (Vers. 8, 9.) The sinister object of false teachers is thus described: 'The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.' (Ver. 10.) When danger approaches, into which, perhaps, the teachers had led the people, they fled, and thus proved their heartlessness, and showed they were not the true shepherds. They were like the hireling, who cared only for his own interest, to whom the sheep did not belong, and who fled, therefore, and left them, when the destroyer came. 'He that is an *hireling*, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.' (Vers. 12, 13. See, also, Ezek. xxxiv. 2—6.)

Not so with Jesus, 'the good Shepherd,' 'the shepherd and bishop of our souls.' His object was to benefit the sheep. Duty and necessity compelled him to contrast the object of false shepherds with that of the good and true shepherd. 'The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for

the sheep.' (Vers. 10, 11.) A noble, a convincing sacrifice ! What more could Jesus do to evince his sincerity, and show his regard for the flock? He went out among ravening wolves, and exposed himself to their rage and bloodthirstiness ; and, rather than give up the sheep to their destroyers, he fell a victim to their enmity and the good of the flock. Might he not then, without exposing himself to the charge of vanity and ostentation, confront the corrupt teachers of that age, and claim to be the good shepherd, and point forward to his death as the proof of his sincerity and faithfulness ? He owned the sheep, and loved them. 'I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down my life for the sheep.' (Vers. 14, 15.) He was not the *hireling*, but the *owner* ; and so far from fleeing when the wolf came, he laid down his life for the sheep.

Jesus had other sheep that were not then of his fold. Hear his words : 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them, also, I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' (Ver. 16.) This could not take place until all means of separation were removed, and all were brought under the care, and into the fold of the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Jesus was that good shepherd, and gave his life for all mankind. 'He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' (1 Tim. ii. 6.) Thus all mankind were his, and, by anticipation, they were all his sheep ; for he had given himself for all, and he laid down his life for the sheep. In one sense, it is true, at that time, they were not his sheep ; they had not come into his fold, and did not acknowledge him to be the true shepherd. Hence, he says, 'Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' (Vers. 26, 27.) Such were estranged from Christ ; they were his enemies, and the enemies of his flock. When one of this class was converted to Christ, he came into the true fold, and was made, afterwards, in

character, one of Christ's flock by acknowledging him as the true shepherd. So might all his enemies be subdued, and changed, and brought under his guidance and government. When, therefore, he says, 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold,' he speaks of them by way of anticipation of what they would be ; and it is a glorious assurance which the good Shepherd hath given us—
'Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' (Ver. 16.) There will be no division ; there shall be but one fold ; and that shall be the fold of Jesus Christ.

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS.

Matt. xxi. 28—31.

'A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father ?'

THIS parable is preceded, in the narrative of the evangelist, by an account of an interview which took place between our Lord, and the chief priests and the elders. They came unto him with these questions,—'By what authority doest thou these things ? and who gave thee this authority ?' (ver. 23.) To this Jesus said, 'I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.' (Ver. 24.) The question which Jesus asked them was as follows : 'The baptism of John, whence was it ? from heaven, or of men ?' (Ver. 25.) This inquiry threw them into a dilemma, and they could not readily determine what answer to return. 'And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven, he will say unto us, Why did

ye not then believe him ? But, if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people ; for all hold John as a prophet.' (Vers. 25, 26.) The dishonesty of these priests and elders, is remarkable. They either believed that the mission of John was of divine authority, or they did not ; and whatever their opinion was, they might have answered the question readily and honestly. But it seems not to have occurred to them, that it was best to give a direct and sincere answer. They began immediately to inquire how an answer would affect themselves ; and after weighing the result, first on the one side, and then on the other, they came to the conclusion, that it was expedient to utter a falsehood, and declare that they could not tell. 'And they answered Jesus, and said, *We cannot tell.*' Jesus then declares, 'Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.' (Ver. 27.)

After this conversation had taken place, Jesus immediately embraced the opportunity to propose to them the parable now before us. Although disposed to ask questions, they had shown themselves unwilling to answer a simple question which had been just put to them in turn ; whereupon Jesus resolved to put a question to them which it was probable they would answer, and in answering which he foresaw they would condemn themselves. 'But what think ye ?' said he ; i. e. give your opinion on the subject I am about to lay before you. 'A certain man had two sons ; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not ; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father ?' They did not find any difficulty in answering this question, but with great readiness replied, that the son who said he would not, but afterwards repented, and went into his father's vineyard, did the will of his father ; i. e. he did that which was the more acceptable in the sight of his father. Jesus adds, 'Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.'

From these circumstances, it appears evident, that the priests and elders were represented by the son who said to his father, ‘ I go, sir, and went not.’

The publicans and harlots were represented by the son who said, ‘ I will not, but afterwards repented and went.’

The design of this parable was to show, that those who profess the most willingness to do their duty, are not always most ready to perform it ; and, on the other hand, that those who make no professions of obedience, do sometimes perform it more readily and faithfully than others.

The priests and the elders professed to be the people of God ; they alleged that they were his children, and that they were ready to do his will ; but it was notoriously manifest that they had not done it. Like the son who said, ‘ I will,’ but did not,—so they had declared that they would obey God, but had failed altogether in this respect.

The priests and elders were a peculiarly religious people, in their own estimation : they attended to all the duties of religion, such as praying, fasting, paying tithes, making proselytes ; but the commands of God they did not obey. By their professions they said they would obey, but their conduct evinced that they would not. They said, ‘ if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets ; (Matt. xxiii. 30;) but Jesus told them that they proved themselves the sons of those who killed the prophets. They had persecuted John ; they had persecuted Christ ; and they had proved abundantly, that their professions were not to be depended on ; for, as the Saviour remarked, (Matt. xxiii. 3,) ‘ They say, and do not.’

The conduct of the publicans and harlots was directly contrary to that of the priests and elders. They professed nothing, and made no pretensions to religion. They were like the son, who said he would not go, and labor in the vineyard of his father. He did not give any encouragement that the least service might be expected of him ; neither did they put forth any indications that they would be likely to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ. They, however, did give attention to the instructions of Jesus,

and turned to God ; and hence Jesus said to the priests and elders, ‘ The publicans and harlots believed him ; ’ i. e. they regarded what John had said concerning the Messiah. Here, then, the case is fairly before the reader. The priests and elders were professedly a religious people, and claimed to be regardful of the commands of God ; but notwithstanding this, they opposed the religion which God sent Jesus into the world to establish. On the other hand, the publicans and harlots laid no claims to be considered religious, and from their characters, the world in general would have concluded them the last who should be converted to the religion of Christ ; but, like the son who said he would not, but afterwards repented and went, they, against all their former indications, were among the first to enter the kingdom of the gospel. ‘ The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.’ (Ver. 31.)

There can be no question that what is here stated was true. There were instances in which this class sought the society of Jesus, and listened to his instructions with great delight. Matthew himself had been a publican. They ate and drank with Christ, and he was contemptuously styled, by the Pharisees, the friend of publicans and sinners. Despised, as they were, by the leading religious people of the age, accustomed to reproach and contumely, they rejoiced to find their cause espoused by the great Teacher sent from God. His doctrine met, and satisfied their desires, and they received it with joy. ‘ The common people heard him gladly.’ (Mark xii. 37.) For the proud, the censorious, the self-righteous—those who thought they had gained heaven by their own exertions, and who anticipated with fondness the joyful day, when they should see such as they despised suffering the fierce displeasure of God—for such the benevolent, impartial religion of Jesus had no charms. They always opposed Christ when he was on earth ; and in every age since, those of a kindred disposition have hated his doctrine. These are the reasons why the publicans and harlots entered the kingdom of God before the professedly religious Scribes and Pharisees. We learn from this what class of

people it is, among whom, it may be expected, at the present day, the doctrine of the impartial Saviour shall flourish in its purity.* It is not those who place their confidence in their own righteousness, and ‘who despise others.’ (Luke xviii. 9.) Such do now, as they always have, despise a doctrine which is based on the broad principle of impartial and unmerited grace. They set up strong claims to be truly religious,—they pray often,—they fast often,—they compass sea and land to make proselytes,—they pay tithes of all that they possess ; but they have not the spirit of Jesus Christ. Christianity commends itself to sinners, because it is a dispensation of compassion and forgiveness ; but so far from encouraging them in sin, it turns them, in the most effectual manner possible, to repentance and good works. It constrains them by the love of Christ, and leads them to repentance by a manifestation of the goodness of God. (Rom. ii. 4.) A certain eminent writer, in describing his views of the doctrine of Christ, says, it ‘*meets the wants of man as a*

* The sentiments of the above paragraph have been very grossly and ungenerously misrepresented by Rev. Parsons Cooke, of Ware, Mass., in his work entitled ‘Modern Universalism Exposed.’ He represents me as meaning, that the doctrine of Christ had no tendency to change the tempers and the characters of the publicans and harlots, but that it met and satisfied their impure and unchaste desires ; and furthermore, when I say, ‘Their cause was espoused by the great Teacher sent from God,’ he represents me as meaning, by their cause, their sins, and wickedness, indecency and abandonment ; and that Christ countenanced them in their bad lives. (See pp. 229, 230, of the above named work.) All the reply I have to make to Mr. Cooke, is, that he must have known that he avoided the intended sense of my language, and forced on it a sentiment which he had no reason to suppose I should approve more than himself. If the word of God be true, it is certain that publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God before the boasting, praying, tithe-paying, self-righteous Pharisees. Those unfortunate sinners, despised and ill-treated by the self-styled religious people of that age, found in Jesus a compassionate heart, that melted them into contrition, as it did the woman, who was a sinner, in Simon’s house ; (Luke vii. 37, 38;) his doctrine met and satisfied their desires for deliverance and mercy ; and they found that Christ espoused their cause ; he did not cast them off, (See John viii. 3—11,) as the Pharisees wished ; but kindly received and encouraged them, and bade them *sin no more*. His doctrine, instead of teaching them to continue in sin, converted them, and brought them into the kingdom of God ; and the same doctrine will produce the same effect in the present age.

sinner. 'The wants of a sinner may be expressed almost in one word. He wants assurances of mercy in his Creator. He wants pledges that God is love in its purest form ; that is, that he has a goodness so disinterested, free, full, strong and immutable, that the ingratitude and disobedience of his creatures cannot overcome it.' * * * 'Thus,' says the writer, 'it holds forth God's grace and forgiving goodness most resplendently ; and by this manifestation of him, it tends to awaken a tender and confiding piety ; an ingenuous love, which mourns that it has offended ; an ingenuous aversion to sin, not because sin brings punishment, but because it separates the mind from the merciful Father.'*

* Channing's Sermon, delivered at New York, December 7, 1826.

PARABLE OF THE
UNFAITHFUL HUSBANDMEN.

Matt. xxi. 33—41. Mark xii. 1—9. Luke xx. 9—16.

‘There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.’—Matt. xxi. 33—41.

THE design of this parable was borrowed in part from the prophecy of Isaiah, although it is considerably extended by our Lord. (Isaiah v. 1, 2.) It was spoken to the chief priests and elders, (ver. 23,) as was the parable which we last noticed. This is evident from ver. 33, ‘Hear *another* parable;’ a sure proof that both were delivered to the same persons. Let us attend first to the illustration of the terms of the parable, and second to its true application.

‘There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.’ The vineyards of the east were sometimes hedged about with thorns, and sometimes enclosed by walls. (Psal. lxxx. 12.) The wine-press is represented to have been dug in the vineyard. This, says Kenrick, ‘is agreeable to the custom of the east, where

wine-presses are not moveable, as with Europeans, but formed by digging hollow places in the ground, and surrounding them with mason work.* The word *press* is often used in Scripture not only for the machine by which grapes are squeezed, but also for the vessel or vat into which the wine runs from the press; that in which it is received and preserved. Whence proceed these expressions: ‘he digged a wine-press in his vineyard;’ ‘your presses shall run over with wine;’ ‘thy presses shall burst out with new wine;’ ‘to draw out of the press;’ ‘Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb.’ It was a kind of subterraneous cistern, in which the wine was received and kept, till it was put into jars, or vessels, of earth or wood.† Harmer says, ‘Wine-presses, it should seem, from several Scriptures, were not moveable things; and according to a parable of our Lord, were somehow made by digging. Sir J. Chardin found the wine-presses in Persia were made after the same manner, being formed, he tells us in his MSS., by making hollow places in the ground, lined with mason’s work.’‡ ‘The presses,’ says Jahn, ‘consisted of two receptacles, which were either built of stones and covered with plaster, or hewn out of a large rock. The upper receptacle, as it is constructed at the present time in Persia, is nearly eight feet square and four feet high. Into this the grapes are thrown, and trodden out by five men. The juice flows out into the lower receptacle, through a grated aperture, which is made in the side, near the bottom of the upper one.’§ Treading the wine-press was laborious, and not favorable to cleanliness. Hence we read, ‘Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat, (or vat)? I have trodden the wine-press alone,’ &c. (Isa. lxiii. 2, 3.) See also 2 Kings vi. 27; Neh. xiii. 15.) Nations that were slaughtered and destroyed were said to be trodden in the wine-press. (Lam. i. 15; Rev. xiv. 19, 20; xix. 15.

The *towers* mentioned in Scripture, are usually places

* Expos. on the passage.

† Harmer’s Obs. lxxi.

‡ Rob. Calmet, art. *press*.

§ Arch. sec. lxxix.

of military strength, (Jud. ix. 51 ; Isa. xxxii. 14 ; Jer. vi. 27;) but sometimes they were for purposes of observation, (Hab. ii. 1,) and it was for this reason they were built in vineyards, (Isa. v. 2.) Jahn remarks, ‘in the vineyards were erected towers, which, at the present time, in Eastern countries, are thirty feet square, and eighty feet high. These towers were for keepers, who defended the vineyards from thieves, and from animals, especially dogs and foxes, (Cant. i. 6 ; ii. 15.’)*

‘And when the time of the [ripeness of] fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.’ The rent of the vineyard was paid from the products of it. (Cant. viii. 12,) where it is said Solomon had five-sixths of the harvest. This was probably an unusually large proportion, though a vineyard, in a good state, would afford a large proportion to the proprietor.

The means of divine instruction which God, from time to time, had afforded the Jews, are, in the parable, represented by a vineyard hedged round about, and put in perfect order.

The servants whom the householder sent to the husbandmen to receive the fruits of the vineyard, represent those whom God had sent, at different times, to the house of Israel, to induce them to bring forth fruit worthy of the distinguished advantages which they had enjoyed.

These servants were treated with contumely and cruelty. Some were beaten, some were stoned, and some were slain. Other servants were sent, and they were treated in the same manner. Last of all the householder sent his son, and he was slain. The application of this can hardly be mistaken. All the messengers whom God had

* Arch. sec. lxvii. Mr. Buckingham, an eastern traveller of considerable note, remarks, that ‘in the route between Jerusalem and the convent of St. Elias, he was particularly struck with the appearance of several small and detached square towers, in the midst of the vineyards. These, his guide informed him, were used as watch towers, whence watchmen to this day look out, in order to guard the produce of the lands from depredations.’

sent to the house of Israel met with such a reception from the Jewish nation, more particularly from their priests and elders, and ecclesiastical leaders. They shed the blood of the prophets, (Matt. xxiii. 30;) the apostles were persecuted in every variety of form ; and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Jewish nation seized and slew. Grotius says here, ‘*They beat one,*’ this may refer to Jeremiah ; as ‘*they killed another,*’ to Isaiah ; ‘*stoned another,*’ to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. (See Acts vii. 52 ; Heb. xi. 37 ; 2 Kings xxi. 10, 16 ; Jer. xliv. 4 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16 ; Neh. ix. 26.’) *

‘When the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto these husbandmen?’ inquired Jesus. The answer is, ‘He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.’ † This was the fate of the house of Israel. They were miserable, and they were miserably destroyed. The means of divine instruction were taken away, and conferred on people who would make good use of them ; or, to use the words of Christ, in which he himself makes a direct application of the parable, ‘The kingdom of God shall be taken from

* Elsley’s Annot. on the place.

† Matthew represents this answer to have been made by the chief priests and elders : but Mark (xii. 9) and Luke (xx. 16) represent Christ himself as answering the question. Bp. Pearce notices the discrepancy without attempting to account for it. The usual opinion is, that the answer was given by Christ, and not the priests and elders ; and that the words in Matt. *they say unto him*, are an interpolation. This suspicion is confirmed by one or two ancient MSS. not having the words. See A. Clarke on Matt. xxi. 41. The suspicion is confirmed, also, by Luke’s account, since there the Pharisees are represented as saying ‘God forbid,’ when they heard that the lord of the vineyard would destroy the husbandmen. (xx. 15.) Kenrick says, ‘According to the evangelists, Mark and Luke, Jesus himself answered the question which he had proposed ; and Luke adds, “When they,” i. e. the priests, “heard it, they said, God forbid.” This corresponds perfectly well to the question which Christ puts to them in the 43d verse, which seems to imply that they had denied the propriety of the conclusion which he had made. It is highly probable, therefore, from these circumstances, that the words, *they say unto him*, have been introduced into this place by some mistake, a conjecture which is confirmed by the authority of one manuscript copy of the original, which omits them.’ Note on Matt. xxi. 41.

you, and given to a nation *bringing forth the fruits thereof.*' (Ver. 43.)

That this is the true application of the parable, there seems no room for doubt. We have shown, that our Lord derived the design from Isaiah v. 1, 2. There the vineyard is expressly said to be the house of Israel. The figure is varied but a little ; and the destruction of the Jews is represented by the destruction of the vineyard, of which the walls were broken down, that it lay waste ; it was neither pruned nor digged ; briers and thorns sprung up in it ; and the clouds gave it no rain.

The object of God in sending his servants to the Jews, was to induce them to bring forth fruits worthy of the distinguished advantages they enjoyed. John the Baptist told the Pharisees to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance,' (Matt. iii. 8.) This is very well represented by the master's sending his servants to the husbandmen, to receive the fruits of the vineyard.

The chief priests and elders saw plainly that *they* were intended as the husbandmen who had the charge of the vineyard, and who had behaved so unfaithfully in maltreating the messengers of God. (See ver. 45.) 'And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, *they perceived that he spake of them.*' And then, as though to verify the words to which they took such strong exceptions, 'they sought to lay hands on Jesus, but they feared the multitude because they took him for a prophet.' (Ver. 46.) They then stood ready to seize the heir and kill him ; but they were afraid of the people, who had been instructed by Jesus, and in whose affections he held a high place. They never, however, abandoned their object ; and afterwards they succeeded in slaying him.

The coming of Christ in his glory, at the end of the legal dispensation, is represented by the lord of the vineyard's returning to his household ; at which time the Jews, the enemies of Jesus, who shed the blood of the prophets and apostles, and crucified Jesus Christ, were destroyed, as will be shown more fully under a succeeding parable. The words of Jesus, recorded in Matt. xxiii. 34—36,

illustrate this. ‘ Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and Scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.’ Their guilt in destroying the different messengers whom God had sent, is here described, and the punishment thereof is denounced ; and all this, we are assured, should come upon that generation. Hence, the Jews were destroyed *during that generation.** The kingdom of God, which till the death of Christ, had been preached only to them, was afterwards preached to the Gentiles, according to the last command Jesus gave his apostles, as follows : ‘ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’ (Mark xvi. 15.) These were the nations who were to bring forth the fruits of it ; and they did bring forth the fruits of it. It was established among them ; and has had a powerful influence, in turning them from darkness to light, and from sin and satan unto God.

Jesus quotes to the chief priests and elders a saying of David, recorded Psalm cxviii. 22 : ‘ The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head-stone of the corner.’ From this he draws a very forcible figure, (see ver. 44.) ‘ And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.’ The Jews had then already fallen on that stone, [Christ] and it was afterwards to fall on them. Paul says, (Rom. ix. 32,) ‘ They stumbled at the stumbling-stone.’ A person may be injured by falling on a

* In the succeeding parable, viz. that of the Marriage Feast, the Jews are spoken of as those who slew the servants of the king ; and it is said the king was wroth, and ‘ sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and *burned up their city.*’ (Matt. xxii. 7.) This seems to point so directly to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, that argument can scarcely make it plainer.

stone ; but if that stone fall on him, the injury must be much greater. The tremendous judgments in which Jesus descended upon the Jews, are represented by the stone falling on them, which was to grind them to powder. They may be said, almost literally, to have been ground to powder. The nation was destroyed ; and the different individuals of which it was composed, were driven, as it were, by the winds of heaven, into every corner of the earth. The punishment was great, but it was just ; it was commensurate to their great wickedness. Their eyes had been shut against the light of truth ; the most faithful counsels they had set at nought ; the messengers of God they had stoned, and his Son they had slain. The judgments of God fell upon them ; and they were ground to powder beneath their force.

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

Matt. xxii. 2—13.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

IT will be perceived, by a reference to the commencement of this chapter, that the same subject is continued which occupies so large a part of the preceding, viz: the rejection and destruction of the Jews, and the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. (See ver. 1:) 'And Jesus answered and spake unto *them* again by parables.' The parable now before us was addressed to the same people to whom the two parables in chap. xxi. had been addressed. (Compare xxi. 23, 45, 46, and xxii. 1.) And that the parable before us was designed to illustrate more fully what had been taught in the two preceding parables, is proved by a comparison of xxi. 35—39, with xxii. 6; and xxi. 41, with xxii. 7. Jesus having said to the chief priests and elders, (xxi. 43,) 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, *and given to a nation bringing*

ing forth the fruits thereof,' he designs, in the parable before us, to show the *welcome reception* which the gospel would meet among the Gentiles. What is said in vers. 11—13, is rather an appendix to the parable, to show that those who professed to embrace the gospel, if they were not clad in the proper Christian virtues, would be detected, exposed and punished.

The parable of the Marriage Feast, like that of the Ten Virgins, (Matt. xxv. 1—13,) is founded the customs of the Jews, at their weddings. One of their most indispensable customs was that of furnishing a feast, or feasts, at a marriage ; and if the parties were wealthy, the feasts continued several days, as will appear from Judges xiv. 10, 12, 17. Hence, many commentators render the passage, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a *marriage feast* for his son ;' and several instances are given from the classics, where *γαμος* is used to signify the *marriage festival*. That a marriage festival is intended in the case before us, is evident from ver. 4. This, as we have said, was an indispensable part of the nuptial ceremonies. It cannot have escaped the attention of the careful reader of the Scriptures, that the early Jews exercised the greatest hospitality to strangers. Notice the treatment of Abraham to the three men, (Gen. xviii. 1—8.) Lightfoot remarks, 'that it was a custom among rich men to invite poor travellers to feasts.'* Hence we read, (Esther ii. 18,) on the exaltations of Esther to be Queen, that 'the King made a great *feast* unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast ; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts according to the state of the king.' 'The Orientals value themselves on magnificence, on the number of their attendants, and the splendor of their equipage. If, in reading the incidental hints which occur in the Bible, on subjects of this kind, we are surprised at a splendor and expense so different from our own, we may peruse these extracts with a full conviction, that what the Bible suggests, even of the roy-

* Works, xi. 271.

al feast of Ahasuerus, or that of Belshazzar, is in perfect conformity to the modes of the times and places where the scenes of such histories are laid ; that it is so far from exceeding the truth, that, in fact, it is a mere abridgment, far below what a literal account would justify,—and certainly much below what Eastern imagination might have heightened, in relating the same stories.* We shall not be surprised, then, that the king, in the parable before us, directed his servants, ‘ Go ye into the highways, and, as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.’ Many thousands, of all classes and conditions, might have been invited to the wedding feast, under such a command.†

* Taylor’s Calmet, Frag. xlix.

† A few extracts from historians of undoubted credibility, will show the customs which in later times have prevailed in the East, in regard to wedding ceremonies.

‘ This year (1612) they did celebrate, at Constantinople, a double nuptial feast, for the marriages of Bassa Mehemet, son to the deceased Cicala, with the Sultan’s sister, and of Bassa Mechmet, Admiral at sea, with the eldest daughter of his Emperor. For the feasts of young Cicala, the Spahi made courses on horse-back, with battle-axes and barres, in the open place, near unto the Serail, where they made divers fire-works of very great charge, but of small invention ; and they gave presents to above twenty thousand persons, besides the charge of the banqueting stuff, which amounted to above twenty thousand crowns, &c.’ Knolle’s Hist. of the Turks, p. 1311, as quoted in Taylor’s Calmet, Frag. xlix.

In a more modern work, we find the following : ‘ It is only on some few and rare occasions, that the rich give a superb fete, to which hundreds, and even thousands, are invited. Even then the expenditure in food and drink is inconsiderable, being averaged by Mr. Ward at eight pence a head. But the cost is immense in fire-works and processions, and in profuse donations of money, garments, and other gifts to those present, especially to Bramins. It is impossible, therefore, to celebrate what is called a respectable marriage at a smaller expense than 500*l.* or 600*l.*, and it has been known to exceed 12,000*l.* The savings of years are thus dissipated in one day of extravagance ; and a family, which was in comfortable circumstances, may be plunged into poverty and even debt, by the marriage of one of its members.’ (Historical and descriptive account of British India, by Hugh Murray, Esq., and others, ii. 251.) Again : ‘ Marriage is the occasion on which every Indian makes his greatest display of pomp, wealth and generosity. Not only must all the ceremonies be costly and splendid, but Bramins, bards and others attend, who expect to be loaded with magnificent gifts. The prince feels that his reputation depends on the manner in which he is celebrated by these august personages, who assure him that while his treasury is emptied, the world is filled with his praise. A single

The guests who were invited to the marriage, were expected to be dressed in a manner suited to the splendor of such an occasion. Among the Orientals, long white robes were worn at public festivals ; and those who appeared on such occasions with any other garments, were esteemed highly culpable, and sometimes worthy of punishment. The person who invited the guests prepared such a garment for each, for the time being ; with which he was furnished on his application to the ruler of the feast. It is supposed the prophet refers to this practice, when he says,—‘ For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice ; he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and *all such as are clothed with strange apparel.*’ (Zeph. i. 7, 8.) Dr. Hammond remarks, that there was a garment which was customary at marriage feasts, called *συδυμα γαμος*, (the same phrase found in the parable) and he quotes from several authors in proof. He adds, that this garment was considered so necessary that, without it, even they who were invited to the wedding,

nuptial feast is sufficient to involve a flourishing exchequer in bankruptcy. One prince, indeed, made an attempt to check this profusion by a law, enacting, that the expenditure on such an occasion should not exceed one year’s entire income of the estate ; but the vain-glory of the nobles could not be confined within these limits.’ (*Idem*, ii. 268.) We give one more extract on this subject. ‘ We returned to Khosrova in time to attend a Chaldean wedding. It was a nephew of the priest, with whom he lives, that was married, and we therefore had the best chance of viewing all the ceremonies of the occasion. Our host, both because as a priest, he had long endeavored to discountenance the frolickings of his parishioners, and because his nephew was a widower with a family of children, as well as to avoid expense, wished, he said, to have little parade. The friends of the bride prevailed, however, and the wedding took place with some eclat. Yesterday, the bridegroom uncovered a large jar of wine in his yard, (which according to the manner of keeping wine here, was buried a foot or two in the ground,) and slew a cow also before our door. The whole of the beef, and large quantities of wine, with butter, and rice, were sent to the house of the bride for the wedding feast. The wine was in the greatest demand, and jars were repeatedly filled and sent away, or drunk on the spot, as if it had been water. The expense of marrying is here so great, that a contribution is generally taken up for the bridegroom through the village ; otherwise few young men would be able to marry.’ *Travels of Smith and Dwight in Armenia, in 1830*, Vol. ii. p. 196.

were not permitted to remain.* Bishop Pearce remarks, that 'mention is made of such a garment by heathen writers; for Aristophanes in Avib v.1692, speaks of a *wedding garment*, and Eustathius, in his note upon Hom. Odyss. z. 28, has these words, *It was a custom for the bride to make presents of garments to the people belonging to the bridegroom at the time of the wedding.* We learn from Cic. Orat. in Vatin. c. xiii. that a white habit was commonly worn at feasts, among Romans. *Cum ipse epuli dominus, Q. Arrius, albatus esset.*' †

Bp. Porteus says, 'It may be imagined, that at a magnificent royal entertainment, if any of the guests happened to fail in their attendance, a great king would never think of supplying their places by sending his servants into the highways to collect together all the travellers and strangers they could meet with, and make them sit down at the marriage feast. But strange as this may seem, there is something that approaches very near to it in the customs of the Eastern nations, even in modern times. For, a traveller of great credit and reputation, Dr. Pococke, informs us, that an Arab Prince will often dine in the street before his door, and call to all that pass, even beggars, in the name of God, and they come and sit down to table; and when they have done, retire with the usual form of returning thanks.'

'The *wedding garment*, was frequently a white robe: and when the guest was a stranger, or was not able to provide such a robe, it was usual for the master of the feast to furnish him with one; and if he who gave the entertainment was of very high rank, and great opulence, he sometimes provided marriage robes for the whole assembly. To this custom we have allusions in Homer, and other classic writers; and there are some traces of it in the entertainments of the Turkish court at this very day. At the entertainment given by the Grand Vizier to Lord Elgin, and his suite, in the palace of the seraglio, pelisses were given to all the guests.' ‡

* Par. and Annot. on Matt. xxi. 2.

† Com. on Matt. xxii. 11.

‡ Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew, Philad. ed. p. 233.

Dr. Macknight, with his accustomed particularity, remarks, ‘It may seem strange, that in such a number of men gathered to this feast, there was only one found who had not on a wedding garment ; and that he should have been punished with such severity for wanting what he could not be expected to have, considering he was compelled to come, while he was performing a journey, perhaps, or sitting begging under the hedges, as appears from Luke xiv. 23. Nevertheless, the heinousness of his offence, and the equity of the sentence that was passed upon him, will fully appear, if we call to mind a circumstance which, because it was commonly known at that time, is not mentioned in the parable. The Easterns, among whom the fashion of clothes was not changeable, as with us, reckoned it a principal part of their magnificence, to have their wardrobes stored with rich habits. Thus Job, speaking of the wicked, says, (xxvii. 16,) ‘*Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay.*’ Accordingly, in Scripture, when the uncertainty of earthly treasures is spoken of, they are represented as subject not only to rust, but to moths, (Matt. vi. 19 ; Jas. v. 2, 3.) The matter is evident, likewise, from Horace ; for he tells us, that when Lucullus, the Roman General, who had enriched himself with the spoils of the East, was asked if he could furnish a hundred habits for the theatre, he replied, he had five thousand in his house, of which they were welcome to take part, or all.

‘We may, therefore, naturally enough suppose, that this king having invited guests to his feast, from the highways and hedges, would order his servants to make each of them a present of splendid apparel, as a further mark of respect, and that they might be all clothed in a manner becoming the magnificence of the solemnity. For it cannot otherwise be understood, how, among such a number, collected in such a manner, only one should have been found wanting a wedding garment, especially as we are told that they gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good. Besides, that the great men of the East were wont to make ostentation of their grandeur, and

to express their respect for their favorites by gifts of this kind, is evident from the presents which Joseph bestowed on his brethren in Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 22. ‘ To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment ; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.’ It appears, likewise, from the agreement which Sampson entered into with the guests at his marriage feast. (Jud. xiv. 12, 13, which see.) To conclude: in the fourth *Odyssey*, Homer tells us, that Telemachus and Pissistratus, happening to arrive at Menelaus’ house, in Lacedemon, while he was solemnizing the nuptials of his son and daughter; the maids of the house washed the strangers, anointed them, and dressed them, and set them down by their master at table. Without all doubt, therefore, the man that was sentenced to be bound, and cast out of doors, had been offered a wedding garment, or sumptuous apparel along with the rest, and would not receive it, and so haughtily came in ragged and dirty as he was. The king, looking on this as a great insult, inflicted upon the person that was guilty of it, a punishment suitable to the demerit of his offence.*

It seems necessary further to remark, in regard to Eastern marriages, that they were generally solemnized in the evening. After the connubial union was ratified and attested, and the religious parts of it were concluded, it was customary for the bridegroom, among the Jews, as well as among the Greeks and Romans, to conduct his spouse in the evening from her friends to her new abode, with all the pomp, brilliancy and joy, that could be manifested. On the arrival the marriage feasting commenced, in apartments splendidly lighted, which formed the greatest possible contrast to the darkness that prevailed without. Nothing could exceed the elegance of these scenes. The couches on which the guests reclined—the sparkling ornaments of the women—the uniformity in the dress of the company—the long white robes in which they were clad—the effulgent light of the hall—all conspired to give the occasion a

* Par. and Com. on Matt. xxii. 13.

brilliancy surpassing description. With these preliminary observations, we proceed to ascertain the true application of the parable.

1. What is meant by the ‘marriage feast?’ ‘Under the image of an invitation to a feast, Christ represents *the offer of the gospel to the Jews*. This contained the choicest blessings which God had to bestow, and might be fitly compared to the dainties of a feast, upon a most joyful occasion, the marriage of a son.’*

2. Who were those first bidden to the wedding, and refused to come? There cannot be a question that the Jews are here intended. This is a construction on which we believe all commentators agree. They, first of all men, were invited to receive the gospel. The apostles were directed not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to ‘go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ (Matt. x. 5, 6. See, also, Matt. xv. 24.) Paul said to the Jews, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you.’ (Acts xiii. 46.) The command to preach the gospel to the Gentile nations was not given until after the resurrection of Christ. (Mark xvi. 15.) The Jews had been frequently invited to partake of this feast; first by the prophets, afterwards by John the Baptist, then by the apostles and by Jesus himself. They made light of these invitations. In the parable of the Supper, one begged to be excused, for he had bought a piece of ground; another, for he had purchased a yoke of oxen; and a third, because he had married a wife. So here it is said, one went to his farm, another to his merchandise. In this way the Jews made light of God’s invitation. They considered it of greater importance to attend to their secular concerns, than to comply with it. Because Christ and the apostles pressed this subject upon their attention, they were enraged, and sought to destroy them. In the words of the parable, they took these servants of God, ‘and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.’ For God to send the gospel to the Jews before any people upon earth, was

* Kenrick’s Expos. on Matt. xxii. 2.

an evidence of his regard ; but to meet it with such trifling excuses as the Jews did, and moreover to slay the messengers who brought it to them, was a high offence, well worthy of the signal punishment they suffered. This punishment is described in ver. 7. ‘ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth ; and he sent forth *his armies*,* and *destroyed* those murderers, and *burnt up their city*.’ This verse marks very distinctly, and beyond dispute, the true application of the parable. The punishment the Jews were to suffer for their rejection of Christ, was their own destruction, and the destruction of their city, by the Roman armies, about forty years after this parable was spoken. Whitby says, ‘ Upon their refusal God decreed to send the Romans to destroy the Jews, and burn their temple and their city ; which they so fully performed as to destroy, during those wars, saith Josephus, *eleven hundred thousand* Jews, to burn their temple, consume, and so lay waste their city, as that all men conceived, it never could be built again.† With this, Kenrick, Bishop Pearce, and all the principal commentators, agree. Thus the Jews proved themselves *unworthy* the ‘ marriage feast ;’ as it is said in the 8th verse, ‘ but they which were bidden were *not worthy*.’ The Jews judged themselves unworthy, as Paul told them at Antioch. ‘ It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves *unworthy* of everlasting life, (which all who believed in Christ *then* enjoyed, see John v. 24,) lo we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, (in Isaiah xlix. 6.) I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou

* ‘ *His armies.*’] ‘ The Romans, (as Theophylact, Jerome, &c. interpret) called God’s armies, because employed by him to destroy Jerusalem, as was foretold, Dan. ix. 26. Assem. Annot.

‘ *Ses troupes.*’] ‘ Lea troupes Romaine de qui Dieu se servit pour executer sa vengeance sur les Juifs.

‘ *Brûla la ville.*’] C’est ce qui a été accompli à la lettre par l’embrasement de Jérusalem ; desorte que c’est ici en même tems une parabole et une prophétie dont l’accomplissement a mis la vérité de la religion Chrétienne dans une entière évidence.’ Beau et L’En.

† Com. on Matt. xxii. 7.

shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.' (Acts xiii. 46, 47.)

3. Who were those afterwards bidden to the 'marriage feast?' Those who embraced the gospel of Christ on its rejection by the Jews, were the Gentiles. There were, it is true, a few of the Jewish nation who were converted to Christ; but the wedding may be said to have been furnished with guests from the Gentiles, as the passage just quoted from Acts shows. The servants of God went through all the world. They went into the highways, the lanes, the streets, the markets, and all places of public resort, and preached the gospel to mankind. They met with great success. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had been preached to all nations, and great multitudes had become obedient unto the faith. Thus the wedding was furnished with guests.

It should be very distinctly remarked, that the servants 'gathered together all, as many as they found, both *bad and good*.' This shows that Jesus foresaw that some unworthy professors would claim to be members of his kingdom, or guests at the marriage feast; a fact which is stated in several of the parables. In one we find that the 'wheat and chaff' are mingled together; (Matt. iii. 12;) in another the tares and the wheat; (xiii. 30;) the net that was cast into the sea gathered of every kind; (xiii. 48.) Many would say, 'Lord, Lord,' that would not *do the will* of their Father in heaven; they would pretend that they had prophesied in the name of Christ, in his name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works. He would reply to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' (vii. 21—23.) Let these facts be remembered, while we pass to the consideration of the guest who had not on the 'wedding garment.'

4. Who were signified by the guest that had not on the wedding garment? 'When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.' The persons assembled on this occasion,

were collected together from the highways, and must, therefore, have consisted of poor, as well as rich. It may appear strange, as we have shown, that the king should ask one of the guests, with surprise and displeasure, how he came there without a wedding garment, and punish him with so much severity for not having one, when his poverty might have been so reasonably urged in his defence, as an excuse for his dress. This difficulty, as has been seen, is removed, when we consider the customs of the Eastern nations, whose wealth consisted very much in possessing large collections of dresses. From these dresses, or from others collected on the occasion, it was customary to furnish the guests at marriage festivals ; and as one was offered to each person, this man was highly blamable for appearing in his common dress ; as he thereby offered an indignity to the person who invited him. He was thus left without excuse, as he might have been clad in the ‘wedding garment,’ had he seen fit.

By the guest without the ‘wedding garment,’ we are disposed to think Jesus designed to represent such of the Jews, as having nominally embraced Christianity, did not possess the virtues of the Christian character—such as cried, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but did not the will of God. In Rev. xix. 8, we read, ‘And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ; *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints* ;’* and again in

* Bulkley, in reasoning against the opinion that the wedding garment was the righteousness of Christ, says, very justly, It was the righteousness of the saints themselves. ‘And, indeed, mere righteousness is in the very nature of it a personal thing. A deformed man might as well expect to be beautiful by another’s beauty, and to be admired accordingly ; a poor man to be rich by another’s riches, or a sick, distempered man to be healthy by another’s health, as any human, any rational being, or moral agent to be righteous by another’s righteousness. Virtuous qualities are in the very nature of them absolutely incommunicable ; and the imputing to ourselves or assuming a foreign character, is so great an absurdity in all other cases, as to be one of the usual, and at the same time one of the most flagrant symptoms of lunacy or delirium. But in religion it seems it is by many accounted one of the most fundamental articles of it. Well may those who esteem it such, contend, as they generally do, for the insignificance, van-

vii. 13, 14, ‘What are these which are arrayed in *white robes*? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have *washed* their robes, and made them *white* in the blood of the Lamb.’ Notwithstanding the Jews generally rejected the gospel, and made light of the invitation to the ‘marriage feast,’ some of them, it is well known, went in with the Gentiles, and were guests. But not all those that went in were fit subjects of the kingdom. There were some claiming to be Christ’s disciples, who professed to cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in his name, to whom he said, in the day of his coming to destroy the Jews, ‘I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’ (Matt. viii. 21—23.)

These, we think, were represented by the guest without the ‘wedding garment.’ He accepted the invitation to the feast, and mixed with the approved guests; and was detected, exposed and punished because he was not arrayed in the dress he should have worn at the feast. The order was given to the servants, to ‘bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ This was the fate which awaited all the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ. (Matt. vii. 12; Luke xiii. 28.) It was the fate of those represented by the *tares*, in the parable of the Tares of the Field, (Matt. xiii. 42;) of the wicked, represented by the bad fish, which were taken in the net, (xiii. 50;) of the Unfaithful Servant, (Matt. xxiv. 51;) and of the Unprofitable Servant, (Matt. xxv. 30.) In the opinion we have here expressed, that the individual without the ‘wedding garment’ represented those Jews who had professed to embrace Christ, but were not worthy and faithful disciples, we coincide with Dr. Whitby, to whose observations, which here follow, we invite the attention of the reader. That this man must represent the Jews, is evi-

ity and pernicious tendency of human reason, when employed upon the subject of religion.’ See his remarks on the Parable of the Marriage Feast.

dent, 1st, Because he is *cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth*, which Christ applies to the Jews, the sons of the kingdom, Matt. viii. 12 ; Luke xiii. 28, whilst the Gentiles are said to come to this supper. 2d, Because the reason assigned for this punishment is that *many are called, but few are chosen*, ver. 14, which language belongs peculiarly to the Jews. 3d, Christ said, in the former chapter, that the *kingdom of God should be taken from them*; and here proceeding to discourse of the same thing, as appears from the connective particle, ver. 1 of this chapter, he shows how worthy the Jews would be of this punishment, as being either wholly refractory to God, calling them by his Son to the participation of these blessings, or coming without due preparation, as the false apostles and deceitful workers did, or else by casting off that wedding garment they had once put on, as did those Jews whose charity waxed cold, Matt. xxiv. 10—12, and who being scandalized fell off from the Christian faith : it remains then that these backsliders, or these false apostles, must be the persons represented by the man not having on his wedding garment.*

Previously to bringing the *notes* on this parable to a close, we wish to offer a few observations in illustration of the phrases ‘outer darkness,’ and ‘weeping, and gnashing of teeth.’ These expressions are found in the following passages, Matt. viii. 12 ; xiii. 42, 50 ; xxii. 13 ; xxiv. 61 ; xxv. 30. Luke xiii. 28. The expression ‘outer darkness’ is derived from the circumstances of Jewish weddings. The nuptial ceremonies took place at night. Hence at those suppers the house of reception was filled with lights, called *δαδες, λαμπαδες, λυκνια, φανοι*, torches, lamps, candles and lanthorns, by Athenaeus and Plutarch : so they who were admitted to the banquet, had the benefit of the *light* ; but they who were shut out were in *darkness*, i. e. the darkness on the outside of the house, in which the guests were ; which must have appeared more abundantly gloomy, when compared with the profusion of

* Com. note on Matt. xxii. 11.

light *within* the guest-chamber.'* The phrase *outer darkness*, was derived from these circumstances ; and as those who were thrust out, were exposed to shame and disappointment, it is said they wept and gnashed their teeth ;—a proverbial expression to describe their extreme anguish. These expressions have long been applied to the imagined misery of the damned in hell, in the future world. We have endeavored to give their primitive sense. They are a part of the parable, and are to be understood as representing the extreme misery of the Jews, excluded from the kingdom of the gospel, shut out from the *light* of truth, enveloped in the *darkness* of error, and suffering the tremendous misery brought upon them at the destruction of their city and nation. This is not only their primitive, but their *only* application. If this was the sense Jesus affixed to them, what right have the doctors of the church to give them any other sense ? The parable now under consideration was completely fulfilled within fifty years after the Saviour's death ; and there is no reason that any part of it should be supposed to refer to the events of the future existence. The words of the great Teacher should be interpreted with the greatest caution ; their original meaning should be sought ; and when this is ascertained, it should not be put aside, or caused to share credence, with any *secondary* sense whatsoever. 'Whoso readeth, let him understand.'

*Adam Clarke's Commentary on Matt. viii. 12.

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

Matt. xxv. 1—13. Luke xii. 35—37.

'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.' (Matt. xxv. 1—13.)

THIS parable refers to the same time and events which occupy the preceding chapter. The remark of Kenrick is very just: 'The word *then*, with which this parable begins, shows that our Lord is still speaking upon the same subject about which he had been discoursing in the last chapter, viz. the period of the destruction of Jerusalem.* To the same purport is the comment of Bishop Pearce. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven," i. e. at that time, and under those circumstances. This shows, that Jesus, in this chapter, is speaking on the same subject as in the foregoing one, viz. what was to happen at the destruction of the Jewish state.' And again, on ver. 13, the Bishop says, 'This plainly shows, that what was said before in this chapter, relates to the destruction of the Jewish state, expressed by the *Son of man's coming*, as in chap. xvi. 27, 28.†

* Expos. on the place.

† Commentary on Matt. xxv. 1 and 13.

On the connexion of the *twenty-fifth* with the *twenty-fourth* chapter, we remark no further here, as it must be brought up again in the notes on the parable of the Sheep and Goats.

The parable before us is evidently drawn from the nuptial ceremonies of the Eastern nations. It was a custom with them, for the bridegroom to repair, on the night of the marriage, with great pomp, to the house of the bride, accompanied by his attendants, called ‘the children of the bride-chamber,’ (Matt. ix. 15,) for the purpose of receiving the nuptial benediction, and conducting the bride to his own mansion. ‘Four persons walked before him, carrying a canopy, supported by four poles, that if the bride intended to walk home to the bridegroom’s house, after the ceremony, she might walk under it, in company with her husband.’* On arriving at the residence of the bride, it was usual for her neighbors and friends, particularly *young women*, to welcome his approach, by going out to meet him, with torches or lamps in their hands. Lightfoot remarks, † that they carried before them *ten* wooden staves, having each of them at top a vessel like a dish, in which was a piece of cloth or wick, dipped in oil, to give light to the company. ‘For this act of civility, they were rewarded, if they came in time, with the honor of being admitted to the marriage feast, which was always held at night.’‡ It will appear perfectly evident from this relation, that the parable is founded altogether on the events of an Eastern marriage. There were ten virgins § who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five are represented as having been wise,

* Brown’s Antiq. of Jews, Part xi. sec. 2.

† Works, xi. 307.

‡ Kenrick’s Expos. Matt. xxv. 1.

§ It is not to be supposed that any particular circumstance is intended by the number *ten*. If any other number had been selected by the Saviour, it would have answered the purpose equally well. *Ten* was probably chosen, because the Jews never had less than that number in their ceremonies and solemnities. ‘Parmi les Juifs on ne devoit jamais etre moins de dix, soit aux noces, soit aux enterremens, soit dans quelque autre occasion de ceremonie et de solemnite.’ Beau. et L’En.

because they were prepared for the *coming* of the bridegroom ; the other five were foolish, because they were not prepared. The cry was made at midnight, ‘ Go ye out to meet the bridegroom.’ The wise went out to receive him, and went in with him to the marriage ; the foolish were excluded, because, not having *watched* for his approach, nor made ready for it, they did not arrive in season.*

* The following accounts of Eastern weddings will be interesting to the reader, and serve to illustrate the parable before us. The first (see A. Clarke’s Commentary on Matt. xxv. 6,) is taken from the Zeud-Avesta, vol. ii. p. 558.

‘ On the day appointed for the marriage, about 5 o’clock in the evening, the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, where the *mobed*, or priest, pronounces for the first time the nuptial benediction. He then brings her to his own house, gives her some refreshment, and afterwards the assembly of her relatives and friends, re-conduct her to her father’s house. When she arrives, the *mobed* repeats the nuptial benediction, which is generally done about *midnight*; immediately after, the bride, accompanied with a part of her attending troop (the rest having returned to their own homes) is re-conducted to the house of her husband, where she generally arrives about three o’clock in the morning. Nothing can be more brilliant than these nuptial solemnities in India. Sometimes the assembly consists of not less than 2000 persons, all richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, encompassed with their domestics, are all mounted on horses richly harnessed. The goods, wardrobe, and even the bed of the bride, are carried in triumph. The husband, richly mounted and magnificently dressed, is accompanied by his friends and relatives, the friends of the bride following him in covered carriages. At intervals, during the procession, guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand beyond description, by a prodigious number of *lighted torches*, and by the sound of a multitude of musical instruments.

Mr. Ward has given the following description of a Hindoo wedding, which forms a striking parallel to the parable before us. ‘ At a marriage, the procession of which I saw, some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of Scripture, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession; some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great company of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed on a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short

It will be hardly possible for the careful reader to mistake the true application of this parable. By consulting verse 13, he will perceive that Jesus himself made the application of it. In deducing the lesson he meant to enforce, he said, ‘WATCH, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.’ Compare this with verse 42 of chap. xxiv. It is evident, that the design of the Saviour was to teach his followers *watchfulness*, in view of his coming to destroy the Jewish state. Dr. Proudfit, an orthodox writer of high repute, and who not very often departs from the common interpretation of the Scriptures, allows that this parable has primary reference to the Jews. We give his sentiments on the subject. ‘These words may be considered as referring, primarily and principally, to the people of the Jews. The *slumber* and *sleep*, which the virgins were indulging, may be designed to express the deep and deplorable infatuation of that nation : they remained unalarmed and unreclaimed amidst the most pointed and repeated admonitions of our Lord and his apostles.’

time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by seapoys. I and others expostulated with the door-keepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord’s beautiful parable, as at this moment—“and the door was shut.”’ (Ward’s View of the History, &c. of the Hindoos, vol. iii. pp. 171, 172.)

Smith and Dwight give us rather a ludicrous account of a wedding procession, which they saw in Armenia ; but as it tends to show the customs of the Orientals at their weddings, we give it place. ‘Our musing was soon interrupted by a scene as comic as the spot was charming. It was a procession conducting a Turkish bride from some neighboring village to her spouse in the one which we were approaching. She and her veiled companions, of every age, were stowed in six covered carts, so narrow as barely to accommodate them, as they sat, tailor-like, upon the bottom, facing alternately the right and the left. They were drawn by buffaloes, to whose yokes were attached standards, ornamented with flying handkerchiefs of every color, as if to add comeliness and gaiety to the most ungainly of beasts. By their sides walked armed men and musicians, to announce, by their guns, and the music of squeaking pipes and coarse drums, what otherwise certainly would not have been expressed, the joy of the occasion.’ (Researches in Armenia, vol. i. pp. 76, 77.)

We give, also, in this place, one or two extracts from the highly interesting journal of Tyerman and Bennett. ‘This being what the Chinese call a lucky day, (Dec. 5, 1825) we saw, along shore, in the course of our cruise from Canton to Wampoa, four marriage processions, with

ties. By the coming of the *bridegroom*, mentioned in the sixth verse, is probably implied the appearance of the Son of God for the destruction of their city, the subversion of their temple, and utter overthrow and dispersion as a nation. This event occurred *at midnight*, that is, at a period altogether unexpected : they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they were absorbed in their secular pursuits and gratifications, until sudden destruction came upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.'*

The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' should here be understood somewhat as the word 'church' is now generally used, viz. to signify the professed followers of Christ. They were represented by the virgins,—those who watched for their master's coming by the wise virgins, and those who were regardless of that event by the foolish. Chris-

large lanterns, bands of barbarian music, and gorgeously decorated sedan for the bridegrooms and their brides.' (Vol. iii. p. 73.) Again, they give us another account. 'In the evening, a splendid procession passed up the street where we lodged, in Calcutta, in honor of the marriage, or rather the betrothalment, of a young baboo, or boy, of great rank, to a girl of the same age—the parties being about eight years old, each. In front marched a fellow who had work enough to carry a pair of huge drums, encircled with wire-work, which were beaten by two able-handed comrades on either side of him. These were followed by the representation of a mountain, made of paper and tinsel, with jutting rocks, trees and animals upon it, supported upon men's shoulders, as were all the succeeding pageants. The next of these was a large boat, terminating forward in the head and breast of an immense bird ; the vessel itself was full manned with rowers, managing their paddles as though they were on the river. Next came the gaudy model of a temple, upon many pillars. A second exhibition of the same kind, in which appeared two well-dressed young women, came afterwards ; and a third, open all round, and most sumptuously adorned, exhibited the bridegroom, sitting under a canopy, and attended by four youths, the latter apparelled in crimson ; but the former (a beautiful child) wore a brown silk frock, spangled with gold, and strung with pearls. The bride, in an elegant palanquin, but not visible, brought up the rear. On each side of the way, artificial trees, flowers, companies of soldiers, and numberless other fanciful accompaniments were borne along with the procession. Bands of musicians, meanwhile, made the air ring with their harmony, or their dissonance, as the ear might be familiar or unaccustomed to their strains. The length of the whole cavalcade was nearly a quarter of a mile.' (Idem. pp. 101, 102.)

* Proudfoot on the Parable, p. 73.

tians were too prone, like these virgins, to slumber. Paul, in writing to the Romans, endeavored to awake them. ‘ It is high time ‘to awake out of sleep.’ (Rom. xiii. 11.) Addressing the Thessalonians, the same apostle said, ‘ For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. * * * * * Therefore, let us not *sleep*, as do others, but let us *watch* and be sober.’ (1 Thess. v. 2, 6.) By the coming of the bridegroom in splendor, with his attendants, Jesus represented his own *coming*, in his glory, with his angels, or messengers, at the destruction of the Jews. As the wise virgins entered with the bridegroom to the marriage, so the watchful Christians entered into the enjoyment of all the blessings which accrued to the church from that signal destruction of its enemies, which took place at the coming of Christ ; and as the foolish virgins were excluded from the marriage, so the heedless, sleeping professors, who did not watch for their Lord, were excluded from the blessings which the watchful enjoyed, and were shut out in darkness and misery with the hypocritical Jews, the avowed enemies of Jesus Christ. Kenrick * will be found to confirm the views here advanced. Remarking on verse 13, he says, ‘ These last words, as well as what the parable begins with, show that it refers to the coming of Christ, for the destruction of Jerusalem, and not to his coming at the general judgment ; for he concludes with the same exhortation which he had subjoined to the account which he gave, in the former chapter, of the signs of his coming in that event : his language there was, (ver. 42,) ‘ Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.’ The intention of the parable is to enforce the necessity of *watchfulness*, by showing the distinction which will be made in that day, between those by whom it was practised, and those by whom it was neglected. The wise virgins, who were prepared for the bridegroom when he came, and

* This author believed in a ‘ general judgment,’ so called, in the future state, and applied the parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matt. xxv. 31—46) to that event.

were admitted with him to the marriage feast, are sincere Christians, who, by the constant practice of the duties of piety and virtue, would secure his favor, and, being always prepared for his coming, would escape the judgments that were coming upon the Jewish nation. The foolish virgins, are those who profess themselves Christians, but want those substantial virtues which are necessary to recommend them to the favor of Christ, and, when he came, would be disowned and rejected by him, and suffered to perish with others.*

This is all it is necessary to say on this parable, in this place ; since it will be brought forward again, in the course of the examination of Matt. xxv. 31—46.

* Exposition on Matt. xxv. 15.

PARABLE OF THE UNFAITHFUL SERVANT.

Matt. xxv. 14—30. Luke xix. 11—27.

'For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one ; to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents ; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents : behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed : And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gathered where I have not strewed ; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. xxv. 14—30.)

DR. CAMPBELL remarks, 'something (it is not said what) is here compared to a man who went abroad. This defect is supplied in the common version by these words —“*The kingdom of heaven is.*” In my opinion it was,

originally the “SON OF MAN IS.” * This we regard as a very probable conjecture, or, at any rate, we are confident Jesus intended to represent himself by the ‘man travelling into a far country.’

As this parable has been injudiciously applied to the future immortal existence, particularly the last clause of it —‘Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth’—it will be proper to lay before the reader the opinions of standard orthodox writers, who may be supposed to have exercised an unbiased judgment in the case before us.

Dr. Proudfit supposes the passage originally to have had an *immediate* and *primary* reference to the Jews, although he was himself disposed to give it a more extensive signification. ‘This parable, like the one which precedes it, may be considered as pointing *immediately* to the nation of the Jews ; they were peculiarly the servants of God by external profession ; they were separated from the rest of the world, and set apart for promoting his praise in the midst of a benighted and degenerate age. Various *goods* or *talents* were committed to them, because to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.’ † Bishop Pearce says, ‘The moral of this parable is, that Jesus would reward or punish Christians according to their behavior under the means of grace afforded to them ; and that from every one would be required in proportion to what had been given to him. And this distinction, made between them, was to be made at the time when the Jewish state was to be destroyed.’ ‡

Dr. Whitby says, also, ‘The parable here, as it respects our Lord Jesus Christ, *going into a far country to receive a kingdom, and return again*, either respects his going to heaven to sit down at the right hand of God in majesty and glory, and so take possession of his mediatory kingdom, and the return to punish the unbelieving and obdu-

* Note on Matt. xxv. 14.

† Lectures on the Parables, pp. 102, 103.

‡ Par. and Com. on the place. See also his remarks on Luke xix. 12.

rate Jews: or, going by his apostles and disciples to erect a kingdom among the Gentiles, and then coming, as it were, back to punish the Jews, according to these words of his, *the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached throughout the world, for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the end (of the Jewish polity) come,* (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

' This parable doth certainly respect the Jewish nation, as appears, (1,) because they are here said to reject Christ's kingdom, saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us*; and upon this account are styled his enemies, and devoted to destruction by him, which agrees still only to the Jews, (ver. 27.) (2,) To them is threatened the punishment of the unprofitable servants, to wit, *to be cast into outer darkness, &c.,* (Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13; Luke xiii. 28, Matt. xxv. 30.) In fine, it is expressly said, he therefore spake this parable to them, *because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear,* (ver. 11, and 12.) *

Dr. Hammond interprets the parable to refer particularly to the Jews. The punishment of the unfaithful servant he applies to ' the fate that soon befel the Jews, after Christ's inauguration in his kingdom, that is, his going to heaven.' † And Dr. Lightfoot follows the same principle of interpretation in the following manner: ' This parable of the *pounds* hath, for the general, the very same scope with that of the *talents*, (Matt. xxv.) That nobleman or king, that went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, is Christ in his gospel, going forth to call in the Gentiles to his obedience: returning, he cuts off the nation of the Jews, that would not have him to reign over them, (ver. 27;) and while they were now in the expectation of the immediate revelation of the kingdom of heaven, and were dreaming many vain and senseless things concerning it, our Saviour, by this parable, warns and admonisheth them, that *he must not look for any advantage by that*

* Paraphrase on Luke xix. 27.

† Works xii. 185.

kingdom, who cannot give a good account of those talents which God had committed to his trust and improvement.'*

Let us proceed to a more particular explanation of the parable. The different kinds of Christians, to whom different opportunities of doing good had been given, were represented by the several servants, on whom different degrees of treasure had been conferred.

The return of the master to reckon with his servants, represents the *coming* of Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem, to reward the faithful and punish the slothful members of his church.

The improvement made by the faithful servants of the means placed in their hands, and the slothfulness of him who hid his talent in the earth, represent the different kinds of conduct pursued by the professing Christians; some of them making a wise use of the advantages they enjoyed, and others indulging in sloth and disobedience.

The righteous retribution with which Jesus visited both faithful and unfaithful professors, is displayed in the manner the servants were dealt with on the return of their master. †

A few remarks on the particular design of Christ in uttering this parable, and such observations as will tend to present the different features of it in the most striking manner, is all that is necessary to be said in this place; since it will be brought forward again, in the consideration of the succeeding parable.

* Works, xii. 185.

† We are not to suppose that the Saviour intended to represent himself as an *austere* and *hard* master, when he puts these words into the mouth of the unfaithful servant: 'Lord, I know thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed.' It seems designed to set forth a plea for disobedience which men frequently use; not to acknowledge the justice of it; and to show that they themselves did not believe it; for, in that case, the servant would have put the money to the exchangers, and returned the same with *usury*,—not extravagant and unlawful interest, for the word *usury* formerly signified only *profit*. (See Dr. Campbell's note on the place.) A certain writer gives us the following just remarks on this subject: 'Are we to infer that our blessed Saviour intended, in this parable, to represent the Supreme Being as imposing a hard and rigorous service upon his creatures, and, nevertheless, inau-

To enforce the duty of *faithfulness* was the particular object which Jesus had in view, as he had enjoined that of *watchfulness* in the parable of the Virgins. Christians were not allowed to plead that they had enjoyed but few advantages, and that it was, therefore, excusable in them if they were not prepared for the coming of their Lord. Nothing more would be required of them than what they actually had the power to do. He who had gained but *two* talents was equally praised and rewarded with him who had gained *five*, because he had done equally as well, considering the means which had been put into his hands. But he to whom *one* talent was given, had not gained anything ; he was slothful and faithless ; he had hid his talent in the earth ; and, to add to his wickedness, he sought to excuse himself by accusing his master. ‘To him that hath,’ i. e. *hath much*, ‘shall be given,’ saith the Saviour, ‘and from him that hath not,’ i. e. *hath but little*, ‘shall be taken even that which he hath.’ The evident meaning here, is, the disciple who has many advantages, and improves them well, will receive still more ; but he that has few advantages, and neglects to improve them, shall lose the little which he possesses.

The master of the servants is described as returning *after a long time*. It is certain that the Christians grew impatient in expecting the coming of Christ. The evil servant, (Matt. xxiv. 48,) is represented as saying, ‘My lord *delayeth* his coming.’ The ten virgins all slumbered and

ing with the utmost severity upon the exact and punctual discharge of it? This, I think, could by no means be inferred, were we to consider the construction and order of the parable itself, without recollecting upon the occasion those natural principles of religion which afford us so safe and easy a clue for the interpretation of it. This representation of their master’s character is put, you see, only into the mouth of the slothful servant, as an excuse for his indolence. The particular circumstances of the parable, therefore, were undoubtedly intended as a description of the vanity and folly of all those pleas which men are so apt to urge in order to release themselves from the obligations of religion. Among others, this very plea itself, of the hardships and severity of the divine commands, is no uncommon one. And if our Saviour had here any particular reference to it, undoubtedly it was with a view to exposing its vanity and insufficiency, as a sample of all the rest. (Bulkley on the Parable.)

slept while the bridegroom tarried. Paul (2 Thess. iii. 5,) recommends ‘the *patient* waiting for Christ.’ James saith, (chap. v. 7, 8,) ‘Be *patient*, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; *for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*’ Under the grievous persecutions which they suffered from the Jews, and which they had been promised should expire at the coming of Christ, it is not strange that they should become impatient; and while James bids them wait patiently for the event, he assures them it is drawing nigh; and the whole strain of his language implies that they would live to see it.

Let it be observed, that the reward of the faithful, and the punishment of the unfaithful disciples, are described in the same manner in this parable, that they are in some others. The former ‘entered into the joy of his Lord.’ So in the parable of the virgins, the wise, when the bridegroom came, ‘went in with him to the marriage,’—this was entering into the joy of the lord of the feast; they participated with him in the happiness of the occasion, from which others were excluded. The faithful disciples participated in the joy of Christ, as he assured them they should,—‘That they might have *my joy* fulfilled in themselves.’ (John xvii. 13.) ‘These things have I spoken unto you, that *my joy* might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.’ (John xv. 11.) The unfaithful were to be cast ‘into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ We have before said, that this method of expression sprung out of the manner in which Jewish weddings were celebrated. Those who were excluded from the wedding were left in the darkness without, which formed a striking contrast to the effulgence of the rooms in which the guests were entertained. The phrase ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth,’ no one will think of understanding in its literal import. It was sometimes a proverbial manner of expressing a high degree of rage, (Job xvi. 9; Psa. xxxv. 16; xxxvii. 12; Lam. ii. 16; Mark ix. 18; Acts

vii. 54;) but in the parable it was expressive of the deep anguish which the unfaithful disciples would suffer. See all the passages where the phrase occurs, which have been quoted under another parable. Some commentators have supposed, that the gnashing of teeth was caused by the cold, which those were obliged to suffer who were shut out from the marriage feast in the night, and that the figure was drawn from that circumstance; but we should remember that those who were cast into the ‘furnace of fire’ (Matt. xiii. 42, 50,) were also said to ‘gnash their teeth,’ which can hardly be supposed to have proceeded from *cold*. On the whole, it is more reasonable to regard the phrase as a mere proverbial expression to signify extreme anguish; and so it appears to have been used in the Old Testament, (Psal. cxii. 10.)

PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS.

Matt. xxv. 31—46.

' When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.'

We have now approached a parable, that, for many ages, by the almost universal consent of the Christian church, has been applied to the events which it is supposed will take place at the end of time, and in the future state of existence. Notwithstanding it has been thus generally misinterpreted, the meaning is certainly plain; and the reader would be infallibly led to it by the context, were his mind not diverted by prejudice from the strain of the Saviour's reasoning, and were he to exercise a due degree

of caution in the investigation. With a proper deference to the general opinion of divines and commentators, we shall proceed with care, assuming nothing which is not evident, nor asserting what we do not prove.

At the very commencement of the parable, the Saviour informs us, when those things of which he spake were to take place. (See ver. 31.) '*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory,' &c. Let the reader now be careful to observe, that all which is predicted in this parable was fulfilled *at the coming of the Son of man in his glory*. The only inquiry, therefore, necessary to make, in order to ascertain when the events of this parable took place, is this—*When did the Son of man come in his glory?**

In the first place, see Matt. xvi. 27, 28: '*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*' This must be the same coming of the Son of man, mentioned in the text. In both instances it is a *glorious* coming: in both the Son of man is accompanied with angels; and in both, he comes to reward men according to their works. There is no room for doubt, that it is the same event which is spoken of in both these passages. Now notice particularly that the Saviour says, '*There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*' To '*taste of death*,' is a Hebraism, signifying *to die*; and hence the meaning of this passage is, there be some standing here which shall not die, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Here it is evident, beyond possibility of mistake, that the coming of the Son of man was to take place during the natural lives of some of those who stood near him at the time he uttered these words. Whenever the evangelists give an account of this conversation of our Lord with his disciples, as to the subject under consideration, they give it precise-

ly in the same manner.* See Mark viii. 38 ; ix. 1, ‘*Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the*

* Among orthodox writers of the highest respectability, it is very generally agreed, that Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27, and John xxi. 21—23, refer to the coming of Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem. See that very valuable work ‘Paige’s Selections,’ pp. 101—104, where the testimony of Gill, Wynne, A. Clarke, Cappe, Pearce, Hammond, Knatchbull, Beausobre and L’Enfant, and Rosenmuller, is given; to which that of Lightfoot and others may be joined. Some recent authors have expressed much surprise, that Universalists of the present day should apply so many passages of the New Testament to the destruction of Jerusalem. To name no other, Rev. Parsons Cooke speaks ‘of the credulity of those who embrace the system of Universalism,’ in believing ‘that so large a part of the Bible should relate to the destruction of Jerusalem.’ ‘If ever I succeeded,’ says he, ‘in digesting the monstrous absurdity, I would be honest enough to call things by right names, and label the New Testament, “JERUSALEM’S DESTRUCTION FORETOLD.”’ Mod. Uni. Exposed, pp. 184, 186. For the comfort and the profit of the author, and all that class of writers, we give the following from the venerable Dr. Lightfoot, who will, we suppose, be allowed to have as much orthodoxy, as much piety, as much learning, as little credulity, as high a respect for the word of God, and as good an acquaintance with the Scriptures and with Jewish writings in general, as Mr. Cooke and his coadjutors.

‘Our Saviour saith, Matt. xvi. 28, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom:”—which must not be understood of his coming to the last judgment; for there was not one standing there, that could live till that time:—nor ought it to be understood of the resurrection, as some would have it; for probably not only *some*, but, in a manner, *all* that stood there, lived till that time. His coming, therefore, in this place, must be understood of his coming to take vengeance against those enemies of his, which would not have him to rule over them, as Luke xix. 12, 27.

‘Perhaps it will not repent him that reads the Holy Scriptures, to observe these few things:

‘I. That the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish state, is described, as if the whole frame of this world were to be dissolved. Nor is it strange, when God destroyed his habitation and city, places once so dear to him, with so direful and sad an overthrow; his own people, whom he accounted of as much or more, than the whole world beside,—by so dreadful and amazing plagues. (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30,) “The sun shall be darkened, &c. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man,” &c.; which yet are said to fall out, within that generation, (ver. 34.—2 Pet. iii. 10,) “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” &c. Compare with this, Deut. xxxii. 22; Heb. xii. 26: and observe, that, by *elements*, are understood the Mosaic elements, (Gal. iv. 9; Colos. ii.

glory of his Father, with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.'

20:) and you will not doubt, that St. Peter speaks only of the conflagration of Jerusalem, the destruction of the nation, and the abolishing the dispensation of Moses.

'Rev. vi. 12, 13 : 'The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, &c. and the heavens departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together,' &c. Where, if we take notice of the foregoing plagues, by which, according to the most frequent threatenings, he destroyed that people, viz. the sword, (ver. 4,)—famine, (ver. 5, 6)—and the plague, (ver. 8;)—withal comparing those words, "They say to the mountains, Fall on us and cover us," with Luke xxiii. 30 ;—it will sufficiently appear, that, by those phrases, is understood the dreadful judgment and overthrow of that nation and city. With these also agrees that of Jer. iv. from ver. 22 to 28, and clearly enough explains this phrase. To this appertain those and other such expressions, as we meet with; (1 Cor. x. 11.) "On us the ends of the world are come;"—and (1 Pet. iv. 7,) "The end of all things is at hand."

'II. With reference to this, and under this notion, the times, immediately preceding this ruin, are called the "last days," and the "last times," that is, the last times of the Jewish city, nation, economy. This manner of speaking frequently occurs; which let our St. John himself interpret, (1 John ii. 13;) "There are many antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time : ' and that this nation is upon the very verge of destruction, when as it hath already arrived at the utmost pitch of infidelity, apostacy, and wickedness.

'III. With the same reference it is, that the times and state of things immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem, are called, a 'new creation,' 'new heavens,' and a 'new earth,'—(Isa. lxv. 17;) "Behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth." When should that be? Read the whole chapter; and you will find the Jews rejected and cut off; and from that time is that new creation of the evangelical world among the Gentiles.

'Compare 2 Cor. v. 17; and Rev. xxi. 1, 2; where, the old Jerusalem being cut off and destroyed, a new one succeeds; and new heavens and a new earth are created.

'2 Pet. iii. 13: "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth :"—The heavens and the earth of the Jewish church and commonwealth must be all on fire, and the Mosaic elements burnt up: but we, according to the promise made to us by Isaiah the prophet, when all these are consumed, look for the new creation of the evangelical state.

'IV. The day, the time, and the manner, of the execution of this vengeance upon this people, are called, 'The day of the Lord,' 'The day of Christ,' 'His coming in the clouds, in his glory, in his kingdom.' Nor is this without reason; for from hence does this form and mode of speaking take its rise:—

See also Luke ix. 26, 27, ‘*For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of*

‘Christ had not as yet appeared but in a state of humility ; condemned, blasphemed, and at length murdered, by the Jews : his gospel rejected, laughed at, and trampled under foot : his followers pursued with extreme hatred, persecution, and death itself. At length, therefore, he displays himself in his glory, his kingdom, and power ; and calls for those cruel enemies of his, that they may be slain before him.

‘Acts ii. 20 : “Before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” Let us take notice, how St. Peter applies that prophecy of Joel to those very times ; and it will be clear enough, without any commentary, what that “day of the Lord” is.

‘2 Thess. ii. 2 : “As if the day of Christ was at hand,” &c. To this, also, do those passages belong, (Heb. x. 37,) “ Yet a little while, —and he that shall come, will come :”—(James v. 9;) “ Behold, the Judge is at the door :”—(Rev. i. 7;) “ He cometh in the clouds :”—and (xxii. 12;) “ Behold I come quickly.” With many other passages of that nature, all which must be understood of Christ’s coming in judgment and vengeance against that wicked nation : and in this very sense, must the words, now before us, be taken, and no otherwise, “ I will, that he tarry till I come :”—“ For thy part, Peter, thou shalt suffer death by thy countrymen, the Jews ; but as for him, I will that he shall tarry till I come and avenge myself upon this generation : and if I will so, what is that to thee ? ” The story that is told of both these apostles, confirms this exposition ; for it is taken for granted by all, that St. Peter had his crown of martyrdom, before Jerusalem fell ; and St. John survived the ruins of it.’ Works xii. 433—436. Again, the same writer says, ‘ In such a sense are such phrases as these to be understood ; “ upon whom the ends of the world are come,” (1 Cor. x. 11.) Not the very last times of the world ; for the world hath lasted sixteen hundred years since Paul spake that ; and how long yet it may last who knoweth ? but the end of that old world of the Jewish state, which then hasted on very fast. In the same sense are the words of our apostle [this extract is from a sermon on 2 Pet. iii. 13,] in his First Epis. chap. iv. 7, “ The end of all things is at hand ; ” not the end of the world, but of that city, nation and economy : the like is that (Jas. v. 9,) ‘ Behold the Judge standeth before the door,’ and divers other of the like nature. * * * * * The state of the church and gospel after that dissolution of that old world, is called, sometimes, ‘the world to come,’ (Heb. ii. 5;) sometimes ‘new heaven and new earth,’ as in the text (2 Pet. iii. 13;) sometimes ‘all things new,’—as ‘old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new,’ (2 Cor. v. 17.) So that, by this time, you see plainly the meaning of our apostle in this place. In the verses before, he speaks of the dissolution of the Jewish church and state in such terms as the scripture useth to express it by, as if it were the dissolution of the whole world ; and, in the words of the text, of the new face and state of the church and world, upon the dissolution, when a new people and a new economy took place.’ Works, vi. 293. See, also, iii. 184, 314, 315, 320, 327 ; and xi. 303, 304, 404, in which last place he states that the phrase ‘day of judgment’ is applied to the destruction of Jerusalem.

man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.' Here, in each instance, the evangelists have recorded the explicit assurance of Jesus, that his coming to judge and recompense men according to their works, would take place while some of those people lived who stood near him when he spake. What can be more plain than this subject?

On other occasions, Jesus embraced opportunities to impress upon the minds of his disciples the same fact with respect to the coming of the Son of man. And in one particular instance, he pointed out John, his beloved disciple, as a person who should live until his coming took place. The account of this is recorded in John xxi. 21—23. ‘Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, *If I will that he tarry till I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall not die; but *If I will that he tarry till I come*, what is that to thee?’ Agreeably to this account, John lived until after the destruction of Jerusalem. Again, in Matt. x. 23, we have the following words: ‘But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, *ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.*’ Here is an unconditional assurance from the lips of the Saviour, that, pursued by their angry persecutors, the disciples would not traverse all the cities of Israel, before the coming of the Son of man took place. Now, as every thing predicted in the parable was to be fulfilled at the time of the coming of the Son of man, why ought it to be applied to a day of judgment in the future state? Is not the fulfilment confined by the words of the Great Teacher, to time long ago passed by?

But there are other means by which to ascertain to what time the Saviour alluded in the parable before us. We must consult the connexion in which it is found. This,

however, is not done because it is thought there is any thing invalid in the explanation and proofs already offered. But as there may be a multitude of proofs brought forward on this interesting question, we wish to make the reader acquainted with a fair proportion of them.

Let it then be understood, that the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew are one discourse, unbroken by any thing but the division into chapters and verses. This division is comparatively a modern invention, carried into effect by uninspired men. It is, in some respects, very useful. By the help of it, we are enabled to point out a particular sentence, phrase, or word in any book, referring to the chapter and verse in which it may be found ; and this we could not conveniently do, without the aid of this division. And it is pre-eminently useful in the construction of Concordances to the Scriptures. Cardinal Hugo, we think, has the credit of being one of the earliest projectors of the division. While we bear testimony to the general utility of it, we still believe that the division is, in some places, made where it ought not to be ; but where, on the contrary, the closest connexion ought to have been preserved. That the 25th chapter of Matthew is a continuation of the subject commenced in the 24th, is evident from the first verse, and even from the first *word* of it. ‘*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.’ Here it is evident the Saviour was referring to a time of which he had before spoken, and that the things he was about to describe were to take place at the same time. If not, why is *then*, the adverb of time, used ? Let us go back and examine the context.*

* Bishop Pearce, in his Commentary, has maintained, at some length, that the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem is continued through the twenty-fifth chapter. Here follow his notes on several verses of that chapter. Verse 1. ‘*Then shall the kingdom, &c.*’ This shows that Jesus, in this chapter, is speaking on the same subject as in the foregoing one, viz. what was to happen at the destruction of the Jewish state. Verse 13. ‘*Wherein the Son of man cometh.*’ This plainly shows that what was said before in this chapter, relates to the destruction of the Jewish state, expressed by the *Son of man’s coming*, as in chapter xvi. 27, 28. Verse 15. ‘*According to his several ability.*’ The moral of this parable is, that Jesus would reward or punish Christians

While Jesus was in the temple, he uttered a malediction upon the Scribes and Pharisees. ‘ Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of

according to their behavior under the means of grace afforded to them ; and that from every one would be required in proportion to what had been given to him. And this distinction, made between them, was to be made at the time when the Jewish state was to be destroyed.’ Ver. 31. ‘ *Shall come in his glory*, i.e. to destroy the Jewish state. See chapter xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64. Jesus is still giving an account of what distinction will then be made between good and bad Christians.’ Verse 34. ‘ *The King*, i.e. the Son of man then in his kingdom. See ch. xvi. 28.’

After all this, when the Bishop comes to vers. 41, 46, he thinks Jesus had the day of general judgment in *his thoughts*. Bp. Pearce had that ideal judgment in *his thoughts*; and although he got nearly through the whole account with a correct interpretation, his religious opinions got the advantage of his reason at last.

Dr. Hammond applies this parable of the Sheep and Goats primarily to taking vengeance on the Jews, but makes it an *emblem* of a future judgment.

Archbishop Newcome was confident that the subject of the destruction of Jerusalem extended into the *twenty-fifth* chapter. See Newcome’s Observations, p. 279, *note*.

Adam Clarke was determined to be right. He made the *twenty-fifth* chapter refer to both events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment in eternity. And when he comes to the 31st verse, he most solemnly assures his readers, without giving them a particle of proof, that ‘ this must be understood of Christ’s coming at the *last day* to judge mankind ; though all the preceding part of the chapter may be applied *also* to the destruction of Jerusalem.’

The above notes are not quoted from these authors because we have the least doubts of the correctness of the exposition here given, but to show what they felt themselves obliged to acknowledge, with all their prepossessions.

Although it may somewhat burden this note, we cannot refrain from quoting the following long extract from a work on the *Plenary Inspiration* of the Scriptures, recently published in this city. It shows very clearly the absurdity and difficulty of applying one part of Christ’s discourse in Matthew xxiv. and xxv. to the destruction of Jerusalem, and another part to a judgment in the future world. It has been already laid before the Universalist public in Universalist Expositor, iii. 36—39, and Paige’s Selections, pp. 141—147. ‘ It is related in the first verse, that “ Jesus went out and departed from the temple : and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple ;” and it is added, in the second verse, that “ Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down.” First, then, let it be admitted that these words apply, in their immediate reference, to the temple of Jerusalem and its destruction, which, as is known from the

them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Bara-

history of Josephus, was as total as is here implied. Let, also, the detailed prediction that follows, through the whole of this and the next chapters, be understood of the events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, as far as they can possibly be adapted to those occurrences. It is allowed, however, on all hands, that the whole cannot be so adapted: let then the place be pointed out where the new subject commences. But let this be done in such a manner, as to be consistent with the fact, that a space of not much less than two thousand years at the least, was to intervene, between the accomplishment of the latter part of the prophecy and that of the former: for the first part of it is considered to have been fully accomplished about A. D. 70; and the remainder not to be accomplished yet: it is also to be recollect ed, that no events belonging to this intervening period are supposed to be treated of in the prophecy, but that, in whatever place the transition is made, it skips at once from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world. Of course, with these premises assumed, every reader will expect to perceive some well defined mark of so great an *hiatus*. How will this expectation be answered? So far from discovering any thing like it, no person can read the two chapters, and draw his inference from their contents alone, without concluding, that the events announced are to follow each other in succession, unbroken by any wide interruption whatever. Accordingly, though commentators are now generally agreed that the *hiatus* must exist, they are by no means unanimous in fixing its situation.

As before observed, the circumstances foretold as far as the twenty-eighth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter, may, by having recourse, here and there, to *figure*, be applied to the calamities which befel the Jewish nation: what follows, respecting the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, and his sending his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, does not, with equal convenience, admit this application: wherefore many eminent writers consider the prophecies relating to the Jews to terminate with the twenty-eighth verse, and all that follows to belong to the greater events commonly designated as the second coming of the Lord, and the general judgment of the world. Unfortunately, however, let both parts of the chapter denote what they may, they are connected together by the binding word 'immediately': "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," &c.—"and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Extreme violence, therefore, is done to the words, by those who thrust in, between the tribulation previously described, and this *immediate* appearing of the Son of man, an interval of two thousand years! On this account, other eminent writers understand the appearing of the Son of man, and all the rest of the chapter, to be merely added in amplification of the previous subject; affirming, however, that "Jesus Christ intended that his disciples should consider the

chias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.' And the Saviour was particular to say in addition, 'Verily I say unto you, *all these things shall come upon this generation.*' (Matt. xxiii. 34—36.)

judgment he was going to inflict on the Jewish nation, as a *forerunner and emblem* of that universal judgment he is to exercise at the last day;" wherefore, they add, "he gives in the twenty-fifth chapter a description of the last judgment;" (See Beausobre and L'Enfant's note on Matt. xxv. 1;) for which reasons, they place the grand *hiatus* between the two chapters. But, unhappily, a particle, the nature of which is to draw things into such close connexion as admits of nothing being interposed between them, here also occurs. The divine Prophet concludes the twenty-fourth chapter with describing the reward which the faithful servant, and the punishment which the unfaithful, shall receive at his coming; and he commences the twenty-fifth chapter thus: "*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.*" Who cannot see that the parable of the ten virgins, "five of whom were wise, and five were foolish," is a continuation and further illustration of the subject introduced by the parable of the faithful and wicked servant;—that both relate to the same series of events, and leave no room for supposing an interval of two thousand years between the one and the other? And even if the subjects were not so obviously connected, what propriety would there be in passing from one event to another so distant by such a copulative as *then*,—a word that always denotes either identity of time, or immediate succession?

A third modification of the same general plan of interpretation has therefore been proposed by Dr. Doddridge. He adheres to the system of the *hiatus*, but he seems to have felt more strongly than some, the difficulties with which it is attended: wherefore, in hopes to avoid them, he steers a middle course between the two theories already noticed. Let us see, then, what degree of probability he has been able to give to the scheme.

He paraphrases the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses thus: "*Immediately after the affliction of those days* which I have now been describing *the sun shall as it were be darkened, and the moon shall not seem to give her usual light; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens,* all the mighty machines and strong movements above, *shall be shaken and broken to pieces;* that is, according to the sublimity of that prophetic language to which you have been accustomed, the whole civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the nation shall not only be shocked, but totally dissolved. *And then shall* there evidently appear such a remarkable hand of Providence in avenging my quarrel upon this sinful people, that it shall be like *the sign of the Son of man in heaven* at the last day; *and all the tribes of the land shall then mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming as it were in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;* for that celestial army which shall appear in the air, marshalled round the city, shall be a sure token to them that the angels of God, and the great Lord of those heavenly hosts, are set, as it were in array against them." Upon this paraphrase I shall only observe, that if the fiery appearances in the sky men-

Shortly after this, Jesus ‘departed from the temple ;’ and, as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us *when shall these things be?* and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and

tioned by Josephus, and which seem to have been similar to those observed during the civil wars in England, and at various other places and times, are really alluded to in the prophecy, it must be in the former part of it. Where Matthew merely says, that there should be “famines and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places ;” (ch. xxiv. 7,) Luke amplifies thus : “ And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences ; and *fearful sights and great wonders shall there be from heaven.*” (Ch. xxi. 11.) This will agree with Josephus : for that historian describes the celestial phenomena as having been seen *before* the siege and capture of Jerusalem, and as *portending* those events ; (Jewish War. B. vi. ch. v. sec. 3;) wherefore it is violating the facts to represent these as being what are foretold as the appearing of the Son of man and his coming in the clouds of heaven, “*after* the tribulation of those days :” beside, being a mean application of a most majestic prediction. However, we have only introduced this popular writer’s paraphrase, for the sake of his note upon it.

On the words, *Immediately after the tribulation of those days*, he remarks thus : “ Archbishop Tillotson, and Brennius, with many other learned interpreters, imagine, that our Lord here makes the *transition* from the *destruction of Jerusalem*, which had been the subject of his discourse thus far, to the *general judgment*; but I think, as it would be very harsh to suppose all the sufferings of the Jewish nation, in all ages, to be called the *tribulation of those days*; [what occasion, by the by, for supposing the sufferings of the Jewish nation *in all ages* to be treated of at all?] so it would, on the other hand, be equally so to say, that the *general judgment*, which probably will not commence till at least a *thousand years* after their restoration, will happen *immediately* after their sufferings; nor can I find any one instance in which *ενθαύτῳ* [*immediately*] is used in such a strange latitude. What is said below (in Matt. xxiv. 34, Mark xiii. 30, and Luke xxi. 32,) seems also an insuperable objection against such an interpretation. I am obliged, therefore, to explain this section as in the paraphrase ; though I acknowledge many of the *figures* used may with more literal propriety be applied to the *last day*, to which there may be a remote, though not an immediate reference.” Moved by these considerations, this worthy divine, though he sees some difficulties in the way, determines to apply the prophecy, thus far, to the destruction of Jerusalem. But when he comes to the thirty-sixth verse, though the series continues to flow without the least sign of interruption, he paraphrases the words, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,” in reference to the “final sentence” of all mankind ; and adds this note : “I cannot agree with Dr. Clarke in referring *this verse* to the *destruction of Jerusalem*, the particular *day* of which was not a matter of great importance ; and as for the *season* of it, I see not how it could properly be said to be entirely unknown, after such an express declaration that it should be in *that generation*.—It seems therefore, much fitter, with Dr. Whity (after Grotius,) to explain it of the *last day*, when

of the end of the world?" (Matt. xxiv. 3.) When shall *what* things be? The answer is contained in the *second* verse. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not *all these things?*" Now another question arises, See ye not all *what* things? Jesus had given indications of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, particularly of the temple. The disciples pointed out to him *the buildings of the temple*, with all their strength and magnificence. "Jesus said unto them, see ye not all *these* things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Strong and magnificent as this temple is, it shall be levelled with the dust. "When shall *these things* be?" inquired the prying disciples, "and what shall be the sign of *thy coming*, and of the end of the world?" By the *end of the world*, the disciples meant the end of the Jewish age. The expression in the original, signifies—*the end of the age*. A great proportion of the most respectable translators and commentators render this passage in this manner.* But the word *world*

heaven and earth shall pass away." Well, then, the Doctor has now taken the leap. The simple connective 'but' has carried him over an interval of not less, according to his computation, than three thousand years. No sooner however has he taken this leap, than he deems it necessary to jump back again. He seems to apply the very next verses to the subject just dismissed: but in a note on the fortieth and forty-first verses, "Then shall two be in the field," &c. he explicitly says, that though these words "may allusively be accommodated to the *day of judgment*, yet he doubts not they originally refer to the *destruction of Jerusalem*, to which alone they are properly applicable." He now, however, determines to fly for the last time across the gulf: so, he adds, "I humbly conceive that the grand *transition*, about which commentators are so much divided, and so generally mistaken, is made precisely after these *two verses*." Let the reader then examine whether he can here find the marks of "the grand transition," so conspicuous to Dr. Doddridge: or whether he will not rather find that the discourse proceeds in the same unbroken series, making no transition but from the announcement of awful facts, to the deducing from them of weighty admonitions. Thus Dr. Doddridge's well-meant attempt to relieve the *hiatus scheme* of its difficulties, only issues in a demonstration that the difficulties are insuperable.' The Plenary Inspirations of the Scriptures asserted, by Rev. S. Noble, Boston, 1828,—pp. 217—223.

* At the head of these I place the renowned Dr. Campbell. He renders the expression, 'the conclusion of this state,' meaning the Jewish state. See his notes on Matt. xiii. 39; xxiv. 3.

Adam Clarke renders the expression, 'end of the age.' Kenrick, in

may be retained, if the same sense is given to it here which it bears in other parts of the New Testament. For instance, ‘ But now once in *the end of the world*,’ or rather *worlds, ages*, ‘ hath he (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’ (Heb. ix. 26.) Christ appeared at the conclusion of the age under the law, and it was to the end of this age that the disciples had reference in their private question to the Saviour. Again, ‘ Now, all these things happened unto them for ensamples ; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the *worlds, or ages*, are come.’ (1 Cor. x. 11.) The ends of the ages had then already come. We are to understand the disciples as inquiring, ‘ What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the *end of the age*? ’

Having ascertained the true sense of the disciples’ question, let us observe particularly the Saviour’s answer to it ; taking care to notice that throughout his reply he keeps prominently in view, *his coming* and **THE END** of the Mosaic age, concerning which they inquired.

The *first sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was this : ‘ Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.’ (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11 ; Comp. Mark xiii. 5, 6 ; Luke xxi. 8.) ‘ These false Christs began to appear soon after our Lord’s death ; but they multiplied as the national calamities increased. Jose-

his exposition, says, ‘ the end of the age ; ’ and observes that the expression was synonymous to the coming of Christ. Wakefield renders it ‘ the end of the age ; ’ as do also the authors of the Improved Version ; Bp. Pearce, Bp. Newton, in his work on the prophecies, and Dr. Hammond on the same passage, with many more who might be named. Dr. Whitby, perhaps, is the most full and particular of all, in his argument to prove that the three questions in Matt. xxiv. 3, all refer to the time and events of the destruction of Jerusalem. On. Matt. xxiv. 3, after comparing Mark xiii. 4, and Luke xxi. 7, he says, ‘ From which places, compared with this, it appears that the three things here mentioned relate to the same time, and are only an enquiry to this effect—When wilt thou come to destroy the temple, and to put an end to the Jewish church and age ? ’ We regret that our limits will not allow us to give the whole of his long note on Matt. xxiv. 3. We recommend it to the serious perusal of all who can have access to his Commentary ; and particularly his *fifth appendix* to the Gospel of Matthew, where he examines the opinion of Grotius, that the three questions in Matt. xxiv. 3, refer to three several epochs.

thus informs us, that there were many who, pretending to divine inspiration, deceived the people, leading out numbers of them into the desert. He does not indeed expressly say that they called themselves the *Messiah*, or Christ: yet he says that which is equivalent, viz: that they pretended that God would there show them the signs of liberty, meaning redemption from the Roman yoke, which the Jews expected the Messiah would do for them, (compare Luke xxiv. 21.) Josephus further adds, that an Egyptian false prophet led thirty thousand men into the desert, who were almost entirely cut off by Felix, the Roman Procurator.* The same historian relates, that in the reign of Claudius, ‘the land was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God.’† Felix, and afterwards Festus, governors of Judea, judging these proceedings to be the commencement of rebellion against the Romans, continually sent out detachments of soldiers, and destroyed great numbers of the deluded populace. Among these impostors were Dosithenus the Samaritan, who affirmed that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; Simon Magus, who said that he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God; and Theudas, who pretending to be a prophet, persuaded many of the people to take their goods and follow him to the river Jordan, declaring that he was divinely commissioned, and that at his command the waters would be divided, and give them a safe passage to the opposite side.‡ Many other examples of pretended Messiahs might be adduced; but the preceding are sufficient to establish the truth of our Lord’s prediction.§

* Josephus, de Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 13. sec. 4, 5.

† Josephus, Ant. Jud. lib. 20. c. 8, sec. 6.

‡ Ibid. lib. 20. c. 4, (al. 5) sec. 1.

§ Horne’s Intro. i. 615, and Bp. Newton on this prophecy, part 1. The illustrations of Christ’s prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, seems to be common property, almost the same words being used by several writers. Newcome’s Observations, pp. 203—212. In the Rev. David Simpson’s Key to the Prophecies there is an instruct-

Jesus points out the *second sign of his coming* in the following words : ‘ And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars ; see that ye be not troubled ; for all these things must come to pass, but THE END [of the Mosaic age] is not yet.’ (Matt. xxiv. 6 ; Mark xiii. 7 ; Luke xxi. 9.) ‘ These wars and commotions were as the distant thunder, that forebodes approaching storms. Previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, the greatest agitation prevailed in the Roman empire, and the struggle for succession to the imperial throne was attended by severe and bloody conflicts. Four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths within the short space of eighteen months. The emperor Caligula commanded the Jews to place his statue in their temple ; and in consequence of a positive refusal to comply with so impious a request, he threatened them with an invasion, which was prevented by his death.* Jesus Christ added,—*See that ye [my disciples] be not troubled*, as the Jews will be, expecting the approaching destruction of their nation ; *but the end is not yet* : these events, alarming as they seemed, were only the preludes to the dreadful and tumultuous scenes that followed. †

Jesus continues to say, ‘ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.’ (Matt. xxiv. 7 ; Mark xiii. 8 ; Luke xxi. 10.) In this prediction Christ declares that greater disturbances than those which happened under Caligula would take place in the latter part of Claudius’s reign, and during that of Nero. The rising of *nation against nation*, portended the dissensions, insurrections, and mutual slaughter of the Jews, and those of other nations, who dwelt in the same cities together ; as particularly at Cæsarea, ‡ where the Jews and Syrians con-

ive history of *twenty-four* false Messiahs, who deluded the Jews between the time of the Emperor Adrian and the year of Christ, 1682. See pp. 133—148.

* Josephus, Antiq. lib. 18. c. 8. (al. 9.) De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 10.

† Bp. Newton, on this prophecy, part 1. Horne’s Intro. i. 615. Newcome’s Obs. p. 212, and following.

‡ Josephus, Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 7. sec. 7, &c. De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 13. sec. 7. c. 18. sec. 1. edit. Hudson.

tended about the right of the city, which contention at length proceeded so far, that above twenty thousand Jews were slain, and the city was cleared of the Jewish inhabitants. At this blow the* whole nation of the Jews were exasperated, and dividing themselves into parties, they burnt and plundered the neighboring cities of the Syrians, and made an immense slaughter of the people. The Syrians, in revenge, destroyed not a less number of the Jews, and every city, as † Josephus expresses it, was divided into two armies. At Scythopolis ‡ the inhabitants compelled the Jews who resided among them to fight against their own countrymen ; and after the victory, basely setting upon them by night, they murdered above thirteen thousand of them, and spoiled their goods. At Ascalon § they killed two thousand five hundred, at Ptolemais two thousand, and made not a few prisoners. The Tyrians put many to death and imprisoned more. The people of Gadara did likewise, and all the other cities of Syria, as they hated or feared the Jews. At Alexandria|| the old enmity was revived between the Jews and Heathens, and many fell on both sides, to the number of fifty thousand. The people of Damascus ¶ too conspired against the Jews of the same city, and, assaulting them unarmed, killed ten thousand of them. The rising of *kingdom against kingdom* portended the open wars of different tetrarchies and provinces against one another ; as ** that of the Jews who dwelt in Peræa against the people of Philadelphia concerning their bounds, while Cuspius Fadus was procurator : and †† that of the Jews and Galilæans against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Galilæans going up to the feast of Jerusalem, while Cumanus was procurator ; and ‡‡ that of the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans and Agrippa and other allies of the Roman empire, which began while Gessius Florus was procurator. But as Josephus says, §§ there was not only sedition and civil war through-

* Ibid. c. 18. sec. 1. † Ibid. sec. 2. ‡ Ibid. sec. 3. Vita Joseph. sec. 6. § De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 18. sec. 5. || Ibid. sec. 7 et 8. ¶ De Bell. Jud. chap. 20. sec. 2. ** Joseph. Antiq. lib. 20. c. 1. sec. 1. †† Ibid. c. 5. De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 12. sec. 3, &c. ‡‡ Ibid. c. 17. §§ Ibid. lib. 4. c. 9. sec. 9.

out Judea, but likewise in Italy, Otho and Vitellius contending for the empire.' *

The *third sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was that of famines and pestilences. 'There shall be famines and pestilences.' (Matt. xxiv. 7; Mark xiii. 8; Luke xxi. 10.)

'There was a famine predicted by Agabus (Acts xi. 28,) which is mentioned by Suetonius, Tacitus and Eusebius, † and which came-to pass in the days of *Claudius Cæsar*; and was so severe at Jerusalem, that (Josephus informs us) many people perished for want of food.‡ Pestilences are the usual attendants of famines, as scarcity and badness of provisions almost always terminate in some epidemical distemper. That Judæa was afflicted with pestilence we learn from Josephus; who says that, when one Niger was put to death by the Jewish zealots, besides other calamities, he imprecated famine and *pestilence* upon them, 'all which imprecations God confirmed against these impious men.' §

The *fourth sign of his coming*, which Jesus pointed out, was *earthquakes*. (Matt. xxiv. 7; Mark xiii. 8; Luke xxi. 11.)

'Earthquakes in prophetic language mean commotions and popular insurrections: if these be intended, they have already been noticed under the second sign; but if we understand this prophecy, *literally*, of tremors or convulsions of the earth, many such occurred at the times to which our Lord referred; particularly one at Crete, in the reign of *Claudius*, and others at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos and other places, in all of which Jews were settled.|| Tacitus mentions one at Rome in the same reign, and says, that in the reign of *Nero*, the cities of Laodicæa,

* Horne's Intro. i. 615, 616. Bp. Newton, part. 1. Newcome's Obs. 212, and following.

† Suetonius, in *Claudio*, c. 18. Taciti *Annales*, lib. 12. c. 43. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 2. c. 8.

‡ Antiq. lib. 20. c. 2. sec. 5. (al. 6.)

§ Horne's Intro. i. 616. Bp. Newton, part 1. Newcome's Obs. 212, and following. De Bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 6. sec. 1.

|| Philostratus in *Vita Apollonii*, lib. 4. c. 34.

Hierapolis, and Colosse were overthrown ; and that the celebrated city of Pompeii in Campania was overthrown,* and almost demolished, by an earthquake. † And another earthquake at Rome is mentioned by Suetonius as having happened in the reign of Galba. ‡

The *fifth sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was fearful sights and signs from heaven. ‘ Fearful sights and great signs, shall there be from heaven.’ (Luke xxi. 11.) The fulfilment of this prophecy, in the most minute and astonishing manner, is recorded by *profane* historians.

‘ Many prodigies are related by Josephus ; particularly that, in Judea, at the commencement of the war, and before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, “ there broke out a prodigious storm in the night, with the utmost violence and very strong winds, with the largest showers of rain, with continual lightnings, terrible thunderings, and amazing concussions and bellowings of the earth that was in an earthquake. These things were a manifest indication, that some destruction was coming upon men, when the system of this world was thrown into such a disorder ; and any one would guess that these wonders portended some grand calamities that were impending.” § The same historian, in the preface || to his History of the Jewish War, undertakes to record the signs and prodigies that preceded it : and accordingly, in his sixth book ¶ he enumerates them, thus ;—

1. A star hung over the city like a sword, and the comet continued for a whole year.
2. The people being assembled to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night there shone so great a light about the altar and the temple, that it seemed to be bright day, and this continued for half an hour.
3. At the same feast

* Taciti Annales, lib. 14. c. 27.

† Ibid. lib. 15. c. 22. This earthquake is mentioned by Seneca, Nat. Quæst. lib. 6. c. 1.

‡ Horne’s Intro. i. 616, 617. Bp. Newton, part I. Newcome’s Obs. 216, 217. Suetonius, in Galba, c. 18.

§ De Bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 4. sec. 5.

¶ De Bell. Jud. sec. 11.

|| Ibid. lib. 6. c. 5. sec. 3.

a cow, led by the priest to sacrifice, brought forth a lamb, in the middle of the temple. 4. The eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass and very heavy, and was scarcely shut in an evening by twenty men, and was fastened by strong bars and bolts, was seen at the sixth hour of the night opened of its own accord, and could hardly be shut again. 5. Before the setting of the sun there were seen all over the country chariots and armies fighting in the clouds, and besieging cities. 6. At the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going into the inner temple by night as usual to attend their service, they heard first a motion and noise, and then a voice as of a multitude, saying, *Let us depart hence.* 7. What Josephus reckons the most horrible of all, one Jesus, an ordinary fellow, four years before the war began, and when the city was in peace and plenty, came to the feast of tabernacles, and ran crying up and down the street day and night, '*A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against all the people.*' The magistrates endeavored by stripes and torture to restrain him ; but he still cried with a mournful voice, '*Woe, woe to Jerusalem !*' This he continued to do for seven years and five months together, and especially at the great festivals ; and he neither grew hoarse, nor was tired ; but went about the walls and cried with a loud voice, '*Woe, woe to the city and to the temple ;*' and as he added at last, '*Woe, woe, also to myself,*' it happened that a stone from some sling or engine immediately struck him dead. These were indeed *fearful signs and great sights from heaven :* and there is not a more creditable historian than the author who relates them, and who appeals to the testimony of those who heard them.* But it may add some weight to his relation, that Tacitus, the Roman historian, also gives us a summary account of the same occurrences. He says,†

* Mr. Milman has admirably wrought up these portentous signs, in his Poem on the Fall of Jerusalem, pp. 106—114.

† Eneanter prodigia—Visæ per cœlum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma, et subito nubium igne collueere templum. Expassæ repente

that there happened several prodigies, armies were seen engaging in the heavens, * arms were seen glittering, and the temple shone with the sudden fire of the clouds, the doors of the temple opened suddenly, and a voice greater than human was heard, that the gods were departing, and likewise a great motion of their departing. Dr. Jortin's remark is very pertinent : ' If Christ had not expressly foretold this, many who gave little heed to portents, and who know that historians have been too credulous in that point, would have suspected that Josephus exaggerated, and that Tacitus was misinformed : but as the testimonies of Josephus and Tacitus confirm the predictions of Christ, so the predictions of Christ confirm the wonders recorded by these historians.' †

The *sixth sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was the persecutions of the Christians. (Matt. xxiv. 9, 10 ; Mark xiii. 9 ; Luke xxi. 12.) This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

' Previously to the other prognostics of the destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples of Jesus Christ were taught to expect the hardships of persecution : and how exactly this prediction was accomplished we may read in the Acts of the Apostles. There we find that some were *delivered to councils*, as Peter and John, (iv. 5, &c.) Some were *brought before rulers and kings*, as Paul before Gallio, (xviii. 12,) Felix, (xxiv.) Festus and Agrippa, (xxv.) Some had *a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries*

delubri fores, et auditæ major humana vox, Excedere Deos. Simil in gens motus excedentium. Tacit. Hist. lib. 5. c. 13 p. 217. edit. Lipsii.

* There is a passage in Whitelock's Swedish Embassy, somewhat like this passage from Tacitus. ' Many observed strange appearances in the sky, exceeding brightness in the night, mingled with various colors, chiefly red, and swiftly passing from one part of heaven to another, and one color, as it were, opposing and encountering another, The flashes of lightning, and clouds, came swiftly one against another, as it were, in charging ; and made breaches where they went, and divided themselves as into bodies of pikes and musketeers : then the sky appeared sometimes all blood-color, afterwards green, yellow and grey, then all black, and, as it were, a new battaile from the north to the south.' Vol. i. p. 455, 456.

† Horne's Intro. i. 617. Newcome's Obs. 231, 260—266. Bp. Newton, part 1. Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 41.

were not able to gainsay or resist, as it is said of Stephen (vi. 10,) that *they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake*, and Paul made even Felix to tremble (xxiv. 25,) and the gospel still prevailed against all opposition and persecution whatever. Some were *imprisoned*, as Peter and John, (iv. 4.) Some were *beaten*, as Paul and Silas, (xvi. 23.) Some were *put to death*, as Stephen, (vii. 59,) and James the brother of John, (xii. 2.) But if we would look farther, we have a more melancholy proof of the truth of this prediction, in the persecutions under Nero, in which (besides numberless other Christians, fell those* two great champions of our faith, St. Peter and St. Paul. And it was *nominis prælium*, as Tertullian † terms it; it was a war against the very name. Though a man was possessed of every human virtue, yet it was crime enough if he was a *Christian*: so true were our Saviour's words, that they should be hated of all nations *for his name's sake*. Hence arose that common saying among the heathens—*Vir bonus Caius Sejus: tanquam modo quod Christianus* :—Caius Sejus is a good man, *only* he is a Christian.' ‡

The *seventh sign of his coming* which Jesus pointed out, was the preaching of the gospel throughout the then known world. (See Matt. xxiv. 13, 14.) 'But he that shall endure (in despite of these persecutions) unto THE END (of the Mosaic age) shall be saved,' i. e. from the evils coming on the Jews. 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall THE END come,' viz. the end of the Mosaic age. 'Accordingly his religion was very widely propagated before the destruction of Jerusalem, as we learn from the history of the apostles, which, in St. Luke's continuation of it, ends about seven years before the event referred to. Such expressions as *in all the world*, and *among all nations*, are not to be understood strictly. Learned men have involved themselves in needless and

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 2. c. 25.

† Tertull. Apol. c. 2. p. 4. edit. Rigaltii. Paris, 1675.

‡ Horne's Intro. i. 618. Bp. Newton, part 1.

inextricable difficulties by rigorously interpreting popular language. A very extensive preaching of Christ is sufficient to fulfil the prediction. To this St. Paul appeals as a known fact : ‘ Have they not heard ? Yes, verily, their sound has gone into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.’ (Rom. x. 18.) ‘ The gospel is come unto you (Colossians) as it is in all the world.’ (Col. i. 6.) ‘ It has been preached to every creature under heaven.’ (Col. i. 23.) The epistles now extant were addressed to Christians at Rome, and in various parts of Greece and Asia.*

We have thus noticed the signs of the coming of Christ, which he himself pointed out, and have seen that they all appeared previously to the destruction of Jersalem, at the end of the Mosaic age. Having faithfully forewarned his followers of the judgments which were soon to fall upon his enemies, Jesus, in the next place, proceeds to give them directions in what way they shall best escape the threatening calamities. ‘ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (chap. ix. and xi.) stand in the holy place ;’ i. e. when ye see the Roman armies encamping in Judea, the holy land ; ‘ then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.’ (Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.)

‘ As all these mountainous countries remained in obedience to the Romans, those who fled into them were safe. In the twelfth year of Nero, Josephus informs us that Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, came with a powerful army against Jerusalem, which he might have assaulted and taken : but without any just reason, and contrary to the expectation of all, he raised the siege and departed. Immediately after his retreat, ‘ many of the principal Jewish people forsook the city, as men do a sinking ship.’ And† a few years afterwards, when Vespasian was drawing his forces towards Jerusalem, a great multitude fled from Jericho into the *mountainous country* for their security.‡

* Newcome’s Obs. 193, 194. Bp. Newton, part 1.

† Josephus, de Bell. Jud. lib. 2. c. 19. sec. 6. c. 20. sec. 1.

‡ Ibid. lib. 4. c. 8. sec. 2.

Among these it is probable that there were some Christians ; but we learn more certainly from ecclesiastical historians,* that, at this juncture, all who believed in Jesus Christ, warned by this *oracle* or prophecy, quitted Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan, and thus marvellously escaped the general shipwreck of their country ; for we do not read anywhere that so much as one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem.[†]

' Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house.' (Ver. 17.) The houses of the Jews, as well as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were flat on the top, for them to walk upon, and had usually stairs on the outside, by which they might ascend and descend without coming into the house. In the eastern walled cities these flat-roofed houses, usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to the other, which terraces terminated at the gates. He, therefore, who is walking and regaling himself upon the house-top, let him not come down to take any thing out of the house ; but let him instantly pursue his course, along the tops of the houses, and escape out of the city gate as fast as he possibly can.[‡] ' Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes,' (ver. 18.) Circumstances would render it necessary that their flight should be sudden and hasty, as Lot's was out of Sodom. ' Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.' (Ver. 19.) The melancholy force of this premonition, has been felt by every one who has read the account given by Josephus of the calamities of Jewish mothers, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. ' But pray ye that your flight (from the city into the mountainous country) be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.' (Ver. 20.) Travelling in the winter would, of course, be more difficult than at any other time, from the hardness of the season, the

* Eusebius, Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. c. 6. Epiphanius Adversus Nazareos, lib. 1. sec. 7.

[†] Horne's Intro. i. 619. Bp. Newton, part 2. Newcome's Obs. 240.

[‡] Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, Dis. xix. p. 2.

badness of the roads, and the shortness of the days ; and on the Sabbath day, it was unlawful to travel any considerable distance, a Sabbath day's journey among the Jews being but about a mile. After having forewarned his followers to flee from Judea, Jesus gives them the reason why they should go. ‘For then shall be great tribulation (in the holy land) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.’ (Verse 21. Compare Ezek. v. 9 ; Dan. xii. 1 ; Joel ii. 2.) Josephus uses very similar language in describing the misery of the Jews. To show the extreme rigor of the calamities, Jesus asserted, that if this time of trouble was of long continuance, all would have been cut off. ‘And except those days be shortened, no flesh should be saved ; but for the elects’ sake those days shall be shortened.’ (Verse 22.) ‘The elect’ is a phrase used to signify those whom God had chosen to believe in Christ in that age, who are spoken of again in ver. 24. The Saviour then proceeded to show, (23—26,) that even during the calamities, false Christs and prophets would arise, and pretend to do great wonders, leading the people into deserts and secret places. To these Jesus bids his followers not give heed. The coming of Christ would not be secret, but open ; the displays of divine justice would be evident, as lightning, ‘which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west’—thus was the coming of the Son of man to be. (Ver. 27.) The coming of Christ to destroy the Jews took place in the approach of the Roman armies to Jerusalem : none need go into secret places to find it,—they would see it in the city ; for ‘wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.’ (Verse 28.) The carcass was in the city, and thither would the Romans repair.

After having thus described the *tribulation* about to come on Judea, by which the destruction of the city was to be preceded, and given his followers the necessary directions by observing which they might escape it, Jesus proceeds to say, ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall

not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' (Verse 29—31.) This language is couched in the strong Eastern manner. It is not, of course, to be understood literally ; but was designed to show that the high powers of the Jewish nation would be overthrown at the coming of Christ. 'The Hebrew poets, to express happiness, prosperity, the instauration and advancement of states, kingdoms and potentates, make use of images taken from the most striking parts of nature, from the heavenly bodies, from the sun, moon, and stars ; which they describe as shining with increased splendor, and never setting ; the moon becomes like the meridian sun, and the sun's light is augmented seven fold : (see Isaiah xxx. 26,) new heavens and a new earth are created, and a brighter age commences. On the contrary the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms, is represented by opposite images : the stars are obscured, the moon withdraws her light, and the sun shines no more ; the earth quakes, and the heavens tremble, and all things seem tending to their original chaos.* Archbishop Newcome says, on Matt. xxiv. 29, 'The style here is very Eastern, and imports that the Jewish rulers, and their church and nation, should be involved in ruin : and that this should be effected soon after the commencement of the troubles alluded to, or in a time which, considering the difficulties of the undertaking, might properly be called short. It is the language of prophecy, to which the Jews were accustomed.'† Bishop Newton, on the same passage, remarks, 'Commentators generally understand (i. e. at the time the Bp. wrote) this

* Lowth on Isaiah, note on xiii. 10.

† Observations, p. 274.

and what follows of the end of the world, and of Christ's coming to judgment ; but the words "*immediately after the tribulation of those days,*" show evidently that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent upon the tribulation before mentioned, and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. It is true, his figures are very strong, but no stronger than are used by the ancient prophets upon similar occasions.* The following extracts from the works of Dr. Warburton confirm what is said by the writers already quoted. 'The prophecy of Jesus, concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is conceived in such high and swelling terms, that not only the modern interpreters, but the ancient, likewise, have supposed that our Lord interweaves it into a direct prediction of his second coming to judgment. Hence arose a current opinion in *those* times, that the consummation of all things was at hand ; which hath afforded a handle to an infidel objection in *these*, insinuating that Jesus, in order to keep his followers attached to his service, and patient under sufferings, flattered them with the near approach of those rewards, which completed all their views and expectations. To which, the defenders of religion have opposed this answer, That the distinction of short and long, in the duration of time, is lost in eternity, and with the Almighty, *a thousand years are but as yesterday,*' &c.

'But the principle both go upon is false ; and if what hath been said be duly weighed, it will appear, that this prophecy doth not respect Christ's *second* coming to judgment, but his *first*—in the abolition of the Jewish policy, and the establishment of the Christian ; that kingdom of Christ, which commenced on the total ceasing of the theocracy. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple-service, so the reign of Christ, *in spirit and in truth*, had then its first beginning.

'This was the true *establishment* of Christianity, not

* Dissertation on the Prophecy relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, part 3.

that effected by the donations or conversions of Constantine. Till the Jewish law was abolished, over which the *Father* presided as king, the reign of the *Son* could not take place ; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind, was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews, transferred, and more largely extended.

' This, therefore, being one of the most important æras in the economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations ; we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem, by which it was effected ; for, in the old prophetic language, the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth, the darkening the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars ; as the rise and establishments of new ones are by processions in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpet, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations.'*

This language, as he observes † in another place, was borrowed from the ancient hieroglyphics : ' For, as in the hieroglyphic writing, the sun, moon, and stars were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility; their eclipse and extinction, temporary disasters, or entire overthrow, &c. so in like manner the holy prophets call kings and empires by the names of the heavenly luminaries ; their misfortunes and overthrow are represented by eclipses and extinction ; stars falling from heaven are employed to denote the destruction of the nobility, &c. In a word, the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic. These observations will not only assist us in the study of the Old and New Testament, but likewise vindicate their character from the illiterate cavils of modern libertines, who have foolishly mistaken *that* for the peculiar workmanship of the prophet's heated imagination, which was the sober established language of their times, and

* Warburton's Julian, book i. c. i. p. 21. &c., 2d edit.

† Divine Legation, vol. ii. book iv. sec. 4.

which God and his Son condescended to employ as the most proper conveyance of the high mysterious ways of Providence in the revelation of themselves to mankind.'*

' And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' (Vers. 30, 31.) This language, highly figurative, is designed to show, that at the time spoken of, viz. ' Immediately after the tribulation of those days,' there shall be a remarkable interposition of Providence, in favor of the church, when the tribes of the *land*† would mourn, and the followers of Christ would be gathered together from all parts of Judea. Archbishop Newcome paraphrases this passage as follows : ' At that time shall appear plain tokens of my coming to execute judgment on the Jews : which shall cause great lamentation to all the tribes of the land ; and there shall be as clear a display of my coming, and of my glorious power, as if I had been seen riding on the clouds of heaven, and thus giving sensible evidence that the fearful punishment was inflicted by me. And I will employ such means to make disciples throughout the world, when the power of the Jews, and their opposition to the gospel are at an end [or, to preserve those from perishing with the Jews, who persevere in their faith, and remember my warnings] as shall appear like sending heavenly messengers, to gather them from the four winds, from one extremity of the heaven to the other, or, from the extremity of the earth to the extremity of the heaven.'‡ That all which is mentioned in verses 30, 31,

* To show that this kind of language was familiar to the Jewish prophets, we refer to the following passages. Job xxx. 28; Eccles. xii. 2; Isaiah xiii. 10; xxiv. 23; xxxiv. 4; lx. 20; Jer. iv. 23; xv. 9; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Dan. viii. 10; Joel ii. 10, 28—32, comp. Acts ii. 16—21; Amos v. 20, and viii. 9. The New Testament writers copied the same language. Acts ii. 16—21; 2 Peter iii. 10—12; Rev. iv. 12—14.

† Bishop Pearce's Com.

‡ Observations, p. 276.

took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, is evident from verse 34; and as it is said, ‘They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven,’ so it is said Matt. xvi. 28,—‘There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’

After having thus pointed out the signs of his coming, Jesus in the next place proceeds to show at what time it should take place, agreeably to the question of the disciples, already noticed, ‘*When shall these things be*, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?’ (Verse 3.) He in the first place shows, that his coming would immediately succeed the signs of his approach, and uses a beautiful comparison to illustrate this fact.

‘Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.’ (Ver. 32.) And then he makes this comparison,—‘So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it (his coming, as in ver. 30) is near, even at the doors;’ (Ver. 33.) to which he adds, to remove all doubt,—‘Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.’ (Ver. 34.) As surely as they might judge that summer was nigh when they saw the fig-tree put forth its leaves; so they might judge that the coming of Christ was near, when they saw the signs which he had pointed out: it certainly should come *during that generation*. It is a strange and unwarrantable perversion of the Saviour’s meaning, to represent him as saying, ‘the race of human beings shall not pass from the earth till all these things be fulfilled.’ Dr. Whitby says, ‘These words, *this age or generation shall not pass away*, afford a full demonstration that all which Christ had mentioned hitherto, was to be accomplished, not at the time of the conversion of the Jews, or at the final day of judgment, but in that very age, or whilst some of that generation of men lived; for the phrase never bears any other sense in the New Testament, than the men of this age.’*

* Paraphrase and Annot. on Matt. xxiv. 34.

Having thus stated the fact, that this coming should take place *during that generation*, Jesus proceeded to show that the particular *day or season* when it would happen, they would not know; and therefore they were required to be continually watchful, lest their Lord should come in an hour that they knew not. ‘But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.’ (Ver. 36.) It was certainly known that the event would happen *during that generation*, but at what particular *day or season*, was not known. People who were not expecting it, would be engaged in their ordinary pursuits. ‘But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.’ (Ver. 37—39.) The friends and enemies of Christ would be engaged in the same pursuits; the former would be saved, the latter lost. ‘Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.’ (Vers. 40, 41.) The work of grinding, in Judea, was done by women, in portable mills, which it took two of them to manage. Jesus next urges the duty of watchfulness, the necessity of which he had shown in the preceding verses. The whole relates to his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, as the succeeding words show: ‘Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your *Lord doth come*.’ (Ver. 42.) ‘Therefore, be ye also ready: For in such an hour as ye think not, the *Son of man cometh*.’ (Ver. 44.)

The duty of faithfulness is next enforced on the disciples, from verse 45 to the end of the chapter. ‘Who then is a *faithful* and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, *when he cometh*, shall find so doing.’ (Ver. 45, 46.) It must be perceived that this refers to the coming of Christ at the

destruction of Jerusalem, when he would reward his *faithful* disciples. ‘But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, *My lord delayeth his coming*,’ i. e. should flatter himself with such a vain hope, and should therefore be *unfaithful*, ‘the lord of that servant *shall come* in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ (Vers. 48—51.) Thus endeth the twenty-fourth chapter. And it will be seen that the *unfaithful* disciples of Christ were to have the same portion with the *hypocritical* Jews, viz. the Scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus frequently, and very justly gave that appellation. (See Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16 ; xv. 7 ; xvi. 3 ; xxii. 18 ; xxiii. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29.) And it should be remarked, that the punishment described in the last verse of chapter xxiv. is the same punishment, which, under several of the parables, we have shown was to be inflicted upon the unbelieving Jews. (See all the passages where the phrase ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ occurs.)

We are now brought, in regularly pursuing the context, to the twenty-fifth chapter, which most certainly is a continuation of the same subject which we have pursued through the twenty-fourth. ‘*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.’ (Ver. 1.) There had been no other time previously mentioned, to which the adverb here used can be referred, except the time of *Christ’s coming at the destruction of Jerusalem*. Then Jesus found some of his disciples watchful, and some careless, and the kingdom of heaven was *at that time* like ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and *watched* for the *bridegroom’s coming*; the other five were careless, and all slumbered and slept. The wise virgins answered to the ‘*faithful and wise servant*,’ (xxiv. 45,) who prepared for his lord’s coming; and the *unwise* virgins answered to the evil servant, who flattered himself that his lord’s coming would be delayed, and who, therefore, prepared not for it, (xxiv. 48, 49.) And hence, in closing the parable of the Virgins, Jesus makes an improvement of ‘it by saying

to his disciples, ‘Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, *wherein the Son of man cometh.*’ (xxv. 13.) The reader will perceive that this argument has the force of demonstration, if he will compare xxv. 13 with xxiv. 36, 42, 44, 50. The parable of the Unfaithful Servant, (xxv. 14—30) was designed to enforce upon the disciples the duty of *faithfulness* in view of the coming of Christ, as the faithful servants kept the return of their Lord continually in view. The lord of those servants returned ‘after a long time,’ (xxv. 19,) and so the coming of Christ did not take place so soon as many expected it; and the unfaithful disciples flattered themselves that their Lord ‘delayed his coming,’ (xxiv. 48.) The punishment of the ‘unprofitable servant,’ is the same precisely with that of the servant who saying ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’ smote his fellow-servants, and ate and drank with the drunken. (Compare xxiv. 51 with xxv. 30.)

We have now come to the parable of the Sheep and Goats. ‘When the Son of man shall *come in his glory,*’ &c. (xxv. 31.) How any reflecting person can suppose that this refers to any other subject besides that which we have traced through the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters, we cannot conceive. The events mentioned in the parable of the Sheep and Goats, now before us, were all to take place, as we have said, when Jesus came in his glory. In all his ministry, he never spoke of any other coming but that which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem ; and, in regard to his coming, he declared that some to whom he spoke should not taste of death till they saw it, (Matt. xvi. 27, 28,) that the disciples should not travel over the cities of Israel before it took place, (Matt. x. 23,) that the apostle John should live until it happened, (John xxi. 21, 22,) and that the high priest of the Jewish nation should see it, (Matt. xxvi. 64.) By what rule of interpretation, then, is the parable of the Sheep and Goats, which certainly was to be fulfilled at the coming of Christ in his glory, to be applied to the supposed events of the future state of existence ?

It should be remembered, that by the parable of the

Virgins, and of the Unfaithful Servant, Jesus designed to show the distinction that would take place at his coming, between faithful and unfaithful disciples ; but the parable of the Sheep and Goats differs from the two former, inasmuch as it takes a wider range, and points out the punishment of the avowed enemies of Jesus. In this the separation is not between the different classes of Christians ; but between the faithful disciples and the persecutors of the church. Hence Jesus goes back, distinctly repeats the circumstance of his coming, and describes the events which would happen at the time it took place. We think, then, we must have shown, to the satisfaction of every individual who shall peruse those pages, that this whole parable was completely fulfilled at the time of Christ's coming to destroy the Jewish state.

To the explanation here given a few objections may be raised, which we now proceed to answer.

1. It may be said, that no such judgment took place, at the destruction of Jerusalem, as is described in this parable. We think a slight examination of the subject will entirely remove this objection. At that time a distinction and division was made between the real friends of Christ and his enemies, whether avowedly such, or professed friends. The former were rewarded for their watchfulness and fidelity, the latter were punished according to their iniquities. That the parable was then literally fulfilled, and that the friends of Christ were actually gathered on his right hand, and his enemies on his left, is not pretended. Nor does the parable assert any such thing ; for if it is interpreted *literally*, it was *sheep* and *goats* only that were divided. These animals are used to represent good and bad men, as they had been by the Jewish prophets, (Ezek. xxxiv. 17 ; Zech. x. 3,) and the form of setting the good on the right hand, and the bad upon the left, was drawn from the customs of the Jews in their courts of justice; those who were adjudged innocent being ranged on the right of the presiding judge, and the guilty upon his left. The parable is, of course, a figure, designed merely to show that at the destruction of Jerusalem a distinction

should be made between the friends and enemies of Christ ; that the former should be recompensed for their devotion to their master and his service, and the latter for their unjust treatment of him and his disciples. All this certainly took place within forty years after the crucifixion.

2. It may be objected, ‘that no *coming of Christ* in the clouds of heaven with the holy angels took place at the destruction of Jerusalem ; that Christ has come but once, viz. when he was born of Mary ; and that his *second coming* is not to happen until the resurrection of the dead.’ The proper answer to this objection is, that the coming of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, was not a real, *personal* appearance, but a virtual coming, in a display of divine power and majesty. It was a common thing among the Hebrew writers, to represent any signal interposition of Providence, or uncommon display of divine power, as the coming of the Lord. This figure occurs both in the Old and New Testaments. See the following beautiful passage from the Psalms : ‘Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad ; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein : then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord ; *for he COMETH, for he COMETH* to judge the earth : he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.’ (Psa. xcvi. 11—13 ; xcviii. 7—9.) This, of course, did not mean a *personal* appearance of the Great Jehovah, but a manifestation of himself in the government of the world. Archbishop Newcome says, ‘The coming of Christ to destroy the Jews was a *virtual*, and not a *real* one, and was to be understood figuratively, and not literally.’ Again he says, ‘The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is emphatically called the *coming of Christ*. The spirit of prophecy speaks particularly of this, because the city and temple were then destroyed, and the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews subverted. The Jews also suffered very great calamities under Adrian ; but not so great as those under Vespasian ; and the desolation under Adrian is not so particularly foretold. *But I think that any signal interposition in behalf of his*

*church, or in the destruction of his enemies, may be metaphorically called a coming of Christ.** Dr. Campbell remarks, on the expression, ‘*Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.*’ ‘We have no reason to think that a particular phenomenon in the sky is here suggested. The striking evidences which would be given of the divine presence, and avenging justice, are a justification of the terms.’† Kenrick observes, ‘The great power and glory of Christ were as conspicuously displayed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other circumstances which accompanied that event, as if they had seen him coming upon the clouds of heaven, to punish his enemies. When the prophet Isaiah represents God as about to punish the Egyptians, he speaks of him as riding upon a swift cloud for that purpose, (Isa. xix. 1.) In that case, there was no visible appearance of Jehovah upon a cloud; but it was language which the prophet adopted, in order to express the evident hand of God in the calamities of Egypt. The same thing may be said of the language of Christ upon the present occasion.’‡ Dr. Hammond interprets Christ’s coming, to be a ‘coming in the exercise of his kingly office, to work vengeance on his enemies, and discriminate the faithful believers from them.’§ Again he says, ‘The only objection against this interpretation is, that this destruction being wrought by the Roman army, and those as much enemies of Christianity as any, and the very same people that had joined with the Jews to put Christ to death, it doth thereupon appear strange, that either of those armies which are called abominable, should be called *God’s armies*, or that Christ should be said to come, when in truth it was Vespasian and Titus that thus came against this people. To this I answer, that it is ordinary with God in the Old Testament to call those Babylonish, Assyrian heathen armies *his*, which did his work in punishing the Jews, when they rebelled against him. Christ

* Observations, pp. 280, 281.

† Note on Matt. xxiv. 30.

‡ Expos on Matt. xxiv. 30.

§ Par. and Annot. Matt. xvi. 28.

is fitly said to come, when his ministers do come, that is, when either heathen men, or Satan himself, who are executioners of God's will,* when they think not of it, are permitted by him to work destruction on his enemies.' † Dr. Whitby is to the same purport.‡

3. It may be objected, that *all nations* were not gathered together at the destruction of Jerusalem. (Matt. xxv. 32.) We reply that *all nations* were gathered together in the sense in which the Saviour used that phrase. Jesus says to his disciples, 'Ye shall be hated of *all nations* for my name's sake.' (xxiv. 9.) The same all nations which hated the disciples, were gathered together at the time of the coming of the Son of man. In verse 14, we are told that the gospel was to be preached unto *all nations*, before the end of the Jewish age; and in verse 30, that *all the tribes of the earth* should see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. All nations, in the sense which the phrase bears here, were assembled at the time spoken of; and that there was a separation at that time, cannot be questioned. Eusebius informs us, that the Christians, observing the signs of the approaching danger, fled from the city, so that not one faithful disciple was lost; while the enemies of Jesus were buried in a common ruin.

4. It may be objected, that as the fire spoken of, (Matt. xxv. 41,) was prepared for the devil and his angels, it must be in the future state, especially as the Jews were not punished in fire in this world. But we reply, that nothing was more common with the sacred writers, than to represent the temporal judgments which came upon the Jews under the figure of fire. (See these Notes, pp. 39;

* Although this may at first strike the mind of the reader as a strange figure, yet it is one frequently used at the present time. How common it is to say of a great bereavement which a family has been called to meet, it is a very afflicting *visitation* of Providence,—God has visited them with afflictions:—He has laid his hand heavily upon them. See Isaiah xxiii. 17; xxvi. 21; Jer. v. 9; vi. 15; xxvii. 22; xxix. 10; Micah i. 3; Acts xv. 14; 1 Peter ii. 12.

† Ibid. Matt. xxiv. 3.

‡ Par. on Matt. xxiv. 30.

40, 44, 45, 55, 64, 65.) ‘Through the wrath of the Lord, of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire.’ (Isa. ix. 19.) ‘The Lord’s fire is in Zion, and his *furnace* in Jerusalem.’ (Isa. xxxi. 9. Compare with this Matt. xiii. 42, 50.) ‘But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day ; then will I kindle a *fire in the gates thereof*, and it shall *devour the palaces of Jerusalem*, and it shall not be quenched.’ (Jer. xvii. 27.) The fire here spoken of is certainly descriptive of temporal judgments. (Compare Ezek. xx. 47, 48.) See; also, Ezek. xxii. 18—22, where it is expressly said that Jerusalem is a *furnace*, that the people were blown upon with *fire*, and were *melted* there. The progress of the armies which went up to destroy Jerusalem is thus described : ‘A *fire* devoureth before them, and behind them a *flame* burneth ; the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness ; yea, and nothing shall escape them.’ (Joel ii. 3.) Jesus saw a peculiar fitness therefore in choosing *fire* as a figure of the woes he denounced upon the Jews. It was a figure their prophets had used, and with which they were all familiar. And when it is said that this *fire* was prepared for the *devil* and his angels, it is a confirmation of the view we have taken of the parable. The Greek word *διαβόλος*, rendered *devil*, signified an adversary in general, and was very often applied to human beings. We have not room to quote all the passages at length. See 1 Tim. iii. 11, where *slanderers* is a translation of *διαβόλος*, and women are exhorted not to be *devils*. In Titus ii. 3, the aged women are exhorted not to be *devils*, or, as *διαβόλος* is rendered, *false accusers*. In John vi. 70, Judas is called a *devil*. In the same sense the leading enemies of Jesus are called *the devil*,—and hence it is said to the church in Smyrna, ‘THE DEVIL shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried,’ Rev. ii. 10. Here certainly the power by which the Christians were cast into prison is called *the devil*. The *devil* and his angels, (Matt. xxv. 41,) were the leading Jews and

their emissaries ; and those for whom the fire was prepared, were cast into it.

5. But it may be objected, that this fire cannot be said to have been suffered in this world, because it is called ‘*everlasting* fire,’ (ver. 41,) and ‘*everlasting* punishment,’ (ver. 46.) The proper answer to this objection is, that the word *everlasting* is very frequently used in the scriptures in application to things of a temporal nature, such as are universally admitted to be so. The land of Canaan was called an *everlasting* possession to the Jews ; (Gen. xvii. 8 ; xlviii. 4;) but every body knows they were long since driven out of it. The *hills* are called *everlasting*, (Gen. xlix. 26.) The Levitical priesthood is called *everlasting*, (Exod. xi. 15 ; Numb. xxv. 13,) but it was superseded by the priesthood of Christ, (Heb. vii. 11, 12.) The statutes of Moses were called *everlasting* statutes, (Lev. xvi. 34,) but they came to an end on the appearance of Christ. The mountains are said to be *everlasting*, (Hab. iii. 6,) but no one supposes they are indestructible, and must remain forever. The Greek word *αιωνιος*, rendered *everlasting*, is derived from *αιων*, and must receive its signification from it. Now that *αιων* does not signify eternity, is evident, because it is used in the plural number. It would be manifestly improper to speak of eternities ; but we fall into the same impropriety when we make *αιων* or *αιωνιος*, signify, of themselves, endless duration. And not only is *αιων* used in the plural number, but words are added to extend its signification, even when numberless *αιωνες* are spoken of. Thus Exod. xv. 10, literally rendered, is, ‘The Lord shall reign from *αιων* to *αιων* AND FARTHER.’ ‘And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars through the *αιωνες*, or ages, AND FARTHER.’ (Dan. xii. 3.) ‘And we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God, through the *αιων*, and beyond it.’* (Micah iv. 5.) As the word *everlasting* is then used in the sacred Scriptures, in a large variety of instances, to

* See the Author’s first Ed. of Smith on Divine Government, pp. 217—227. See, also, Winchester’s Dialogues, Ed. 1831, pp. 53—61. Balfour’s 2d Enquiry, Ed. of 1827, pp. 311—340.

signify limited duration, we say that when applied to punishment it ought, above every other case, to bear that sense. Jehovah hath said that he ‘*will not cast off forever*; that though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.’ (Lam. iii. 31—33.) This sentiment is utterly repugnant to the doctrine of interminable punishment; and requires that the word *everlasting*, in the very few instances in which it is applied to punishment, should be understood in a limited sense, as it must be understood in most of the instances where it occurs.

Speaking to the Jews of the divine chastisements, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews says, ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’ (Heb. xii. 11.) If this chastisement were strictly *endless*, how could it *afterward* yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness? Is there any *afterward* to eternity? Moreover, that the *fire*, (Matt. xxv. 41,) and *punishment*, (ver. 46,) are not to be understood as endless in their duration, is evident from this circumstance. The parable in which they occur was spoken of Jews; and the New Testament writers teach explicitly the salvation of the whole Jewish nation.’ (See Rom. xi. 25, 26, and Heb. viii. 8—11.)*

6. The last objection which we can suppose may rest upon the mind of the reader is this: the same word is applied to *life* which is applied to *punishment*. It is render-

* Orthodox writers have very freely allowed that the words *everlasting* and *eternal* are frequently used in a limited sense.—Prof. Stuart says, the word translated *everlasting* ‘is sometimes applied, (as in common life,) to things which endure for a long time, for an indefinite period. So it is applied to the Jewish priesthood; to the Mosaic ordinances; to the possession of the land of Canaan; to the hills and mountains; to the earth; to the time of service to be rendered by a slave; and to some other things of a like nature.’ (Exeget. Essays, p. 50.

Prof. Robinson of the Andover Institution, says, in his edition of Calmet, ‘*Eternal, Eternity.* These words often signify a very long time, and therefore must not always be understood literally; so we find “eternal mountains,” to denote their antiquity, Gen. xlvi. 26.

ed in one case ‘everlasting,’ in the other, ‘eternal;’ but it is the same word in both instances. If it does not signify endless duration when applied to punishment, how can it when applied to *life*? On the other hand, if this life is to be enjoyed in the future state, why is not the punishment also to be suffered there?

Answer : The same word is, in the same connexion, applied to different things, in other parts of the Scriptures, when, as all acknowledge, one thing is temporal, the other endless. (Hab. iii. 6 ; Rom. xvi. 25, 26, and others.)

But the proper answer to the objection, in the case before us, is this,—We consider that the *life* spoken of in Matt. xxv. 46, is not confined to the immortal existence into which the human race are to be raised after natural death ; but is that spiritual life which the believer enjoys in this state. St. John says, ‘ We know that we *have passed from death unto life*, because we love the brethren.’ (1 John iii. 14.) John knew that he had then already passed from death unto *life*; he was then in the enjoyment of spiritual *life*. Jesus saith, He that heareth my

Deut. xxxiii. 15. God promises to David an eternal kingdom and posterity ; that is, his and his son’s empire will be of long duration.’

Cruden, whose orthodoxy was never doubted, says, in his Concordance on the word *eternal*, ‘The words *eternal*, *everlasting*, *forever*, are sometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly ; for example, it is said, Gen. xvii. 8, “ I will give to thee, and to thy seed, the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.” And in chap. xiii. 15, “ I will give it to thee and to thy seed forever ;” that is, for a long space of time. And in Gen. xlxi. 36, we find *everlasting hills*, so called to denote their antiquity, stability, and duration ; and this expression is used to show the long continuance and durableness of Joseph’s blessing. God promises a throne to David, an eternal kingdom, a posterity that will never be extinguished ; that is, that his and his son’s empire will be of very long duration, 2 Sam. vii. 16. 1 Chron xvii. 14. Thus, *thou shalt be our guide, from this time forth, even forever* ; that is, during our whole life. And in many other places of scripture, and in particular where the word *forever* is applied to the Jewish rites and privileges, it commonly signifies no more than during the standing of that commonwealth, or until the coming of the Messiah.’

Hear Whitby also on this point. ‘ Nor is there anything more common and familiar in Scripture, than to represent a thorough and irreparable destruction, whose effects and signs shall be still remaining, by the word *aiwrio*, which we render *eternal*; *** and this specially is threatened where the destruction of a nation or people is likened to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.’ Com. on Jude 7.

word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath (he then already possessed) *everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed* from death unto life.' (John v. 24.) And the original phrase here is the same which is rendered *eternal life* in Matt. xxv. 46. We believe that the 'everlasting life,' in John v. 24, and the 'life eternal,' in Matt. xxv. 46, are one and the same thing. This view of the subject completely removes the objection last introduced. For, if the punishment and the life are both allowed by us to be in the same state, the objection loses all its force. (See of these Notes, pp. 55, 57, 68, 69, 264.)

Notwithstanding the 'everlasting life' spoken of in the New Testament, is applied in these pages to that state of rest, purity and joy into which believers of the gospel entered, whenever they embraced it, the author takes this opportunity to say, that he undoubtingly believes that a future state of immortality and incorruption is revealed in the New Testament. This, like the present existence, will be the gift of God; and cannot, in the nature of things, as it seems to us, be affected by the conduct of men in this life. Whatever men there enjoy, will be the effect of the constitution in which they are raised from the dead; and it is our humble hope, inspired by the gospel of Jesus, that the whole human race shall be brought to the enjoyment of a sinless, incorruptible immortality.

May the perusal of these pages induce, in the mind of the reader, a sincere desire to know the truth, and to gain a knowledge of the true sense of the sacred Scriptures. May it inspire him with a reverence of the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of the manner of his instructions; of the purity of his morality; of his wisdom in difficult circumstances; of his kind regard for sinners; and above all, of his obedience and resignation to the will of God. May it cause him to imitate, so far as human nature can do, the greatest pattern of wisdom, meekness, piety and benevolence, which the world hath ever seen.

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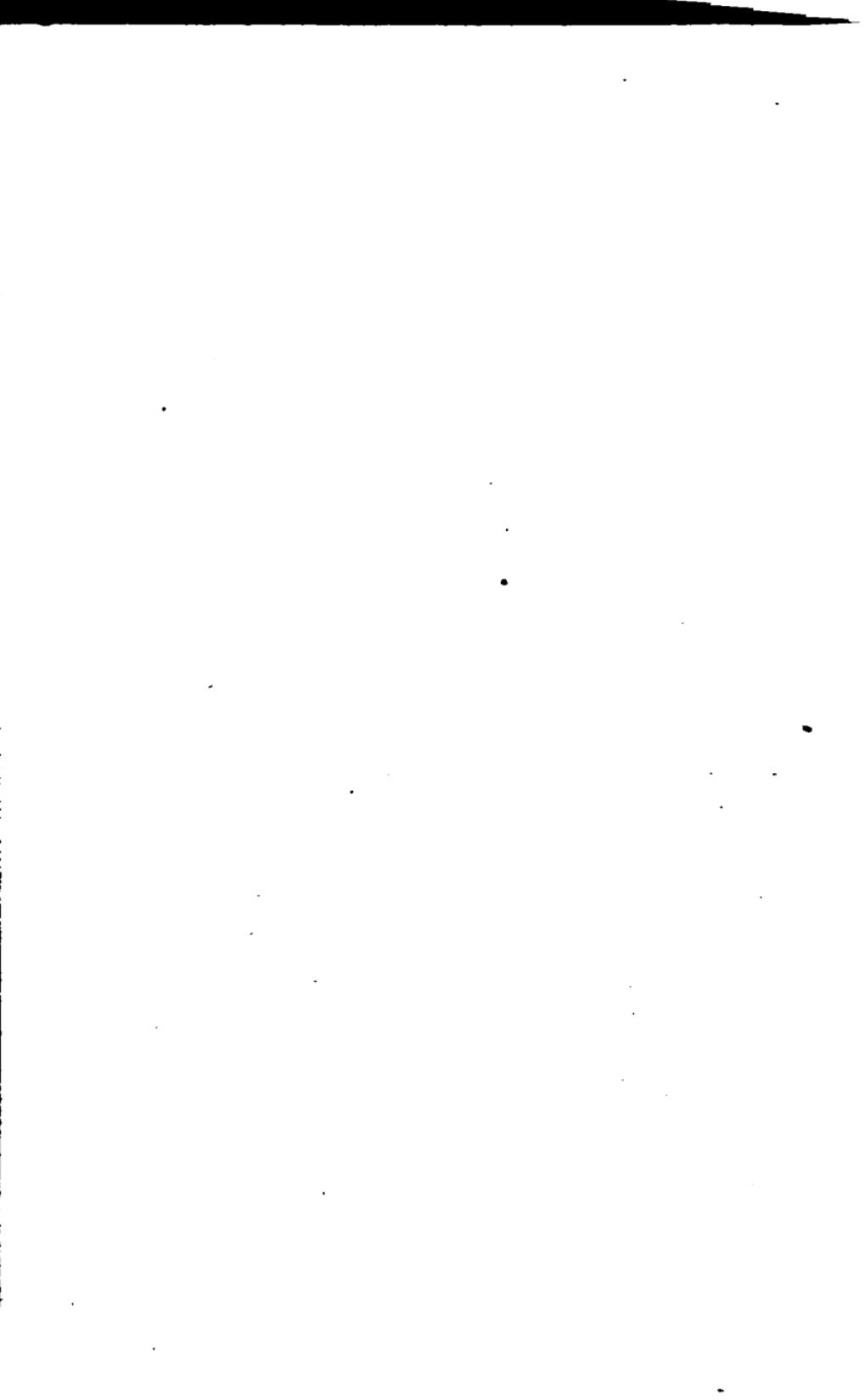
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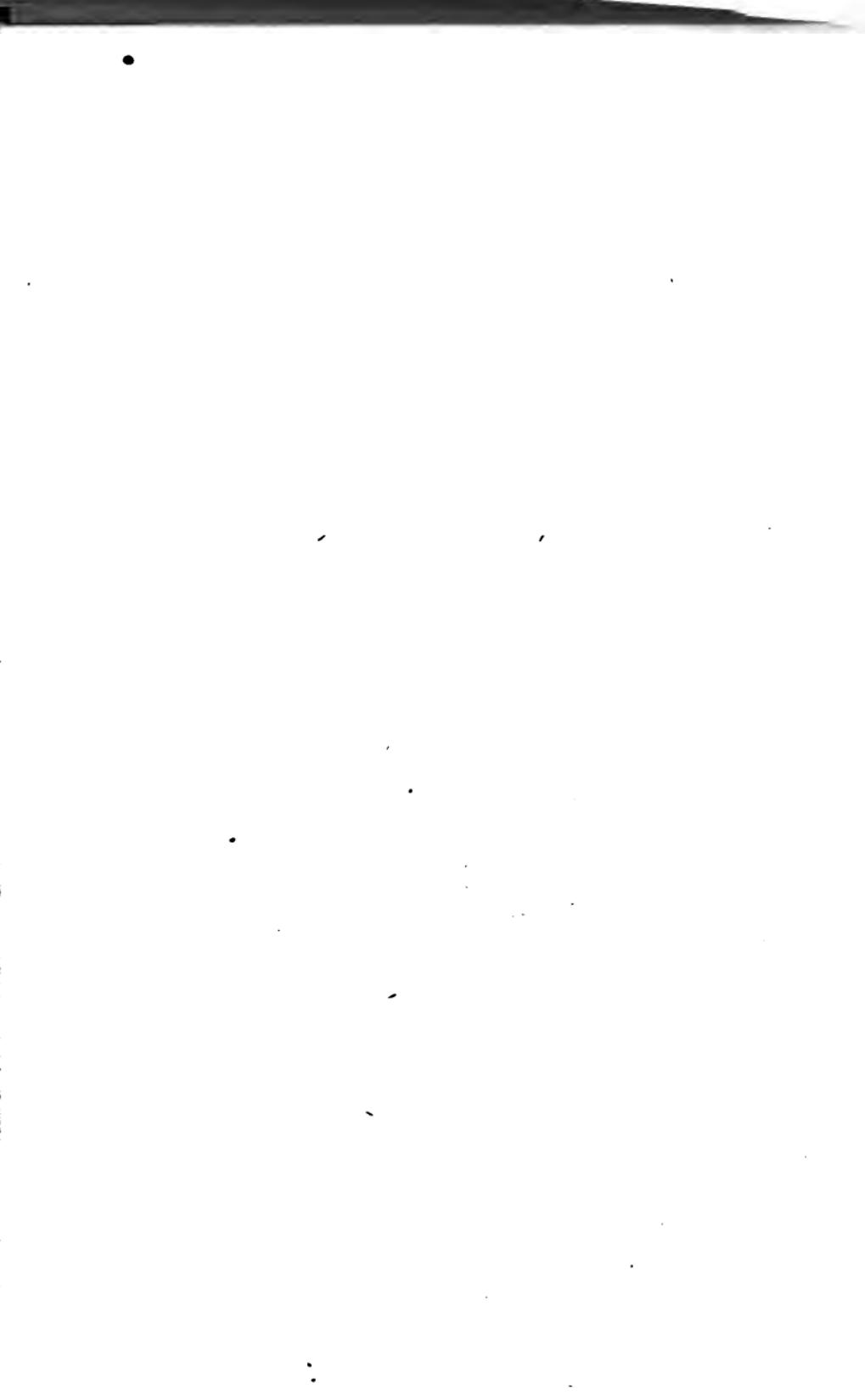
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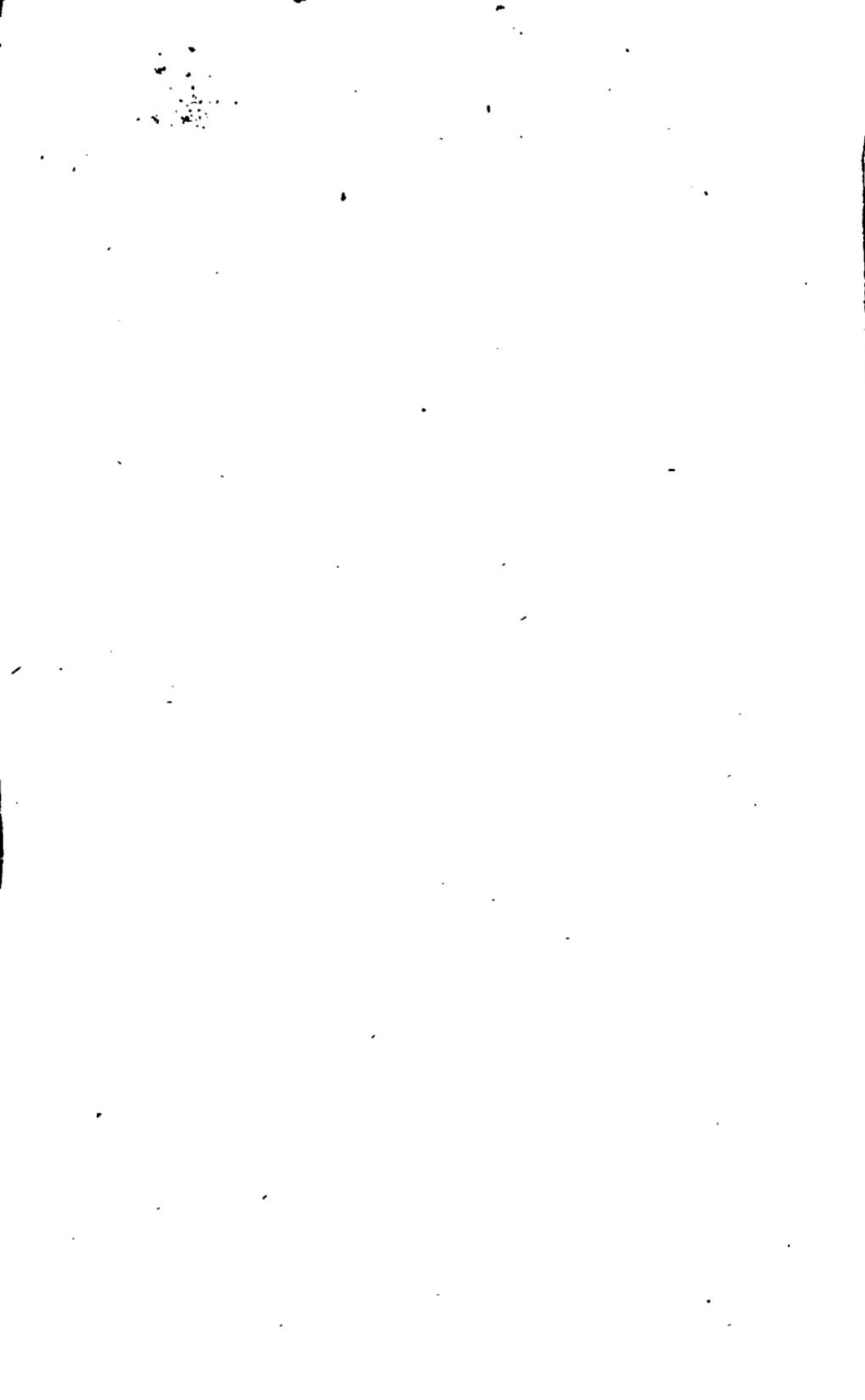
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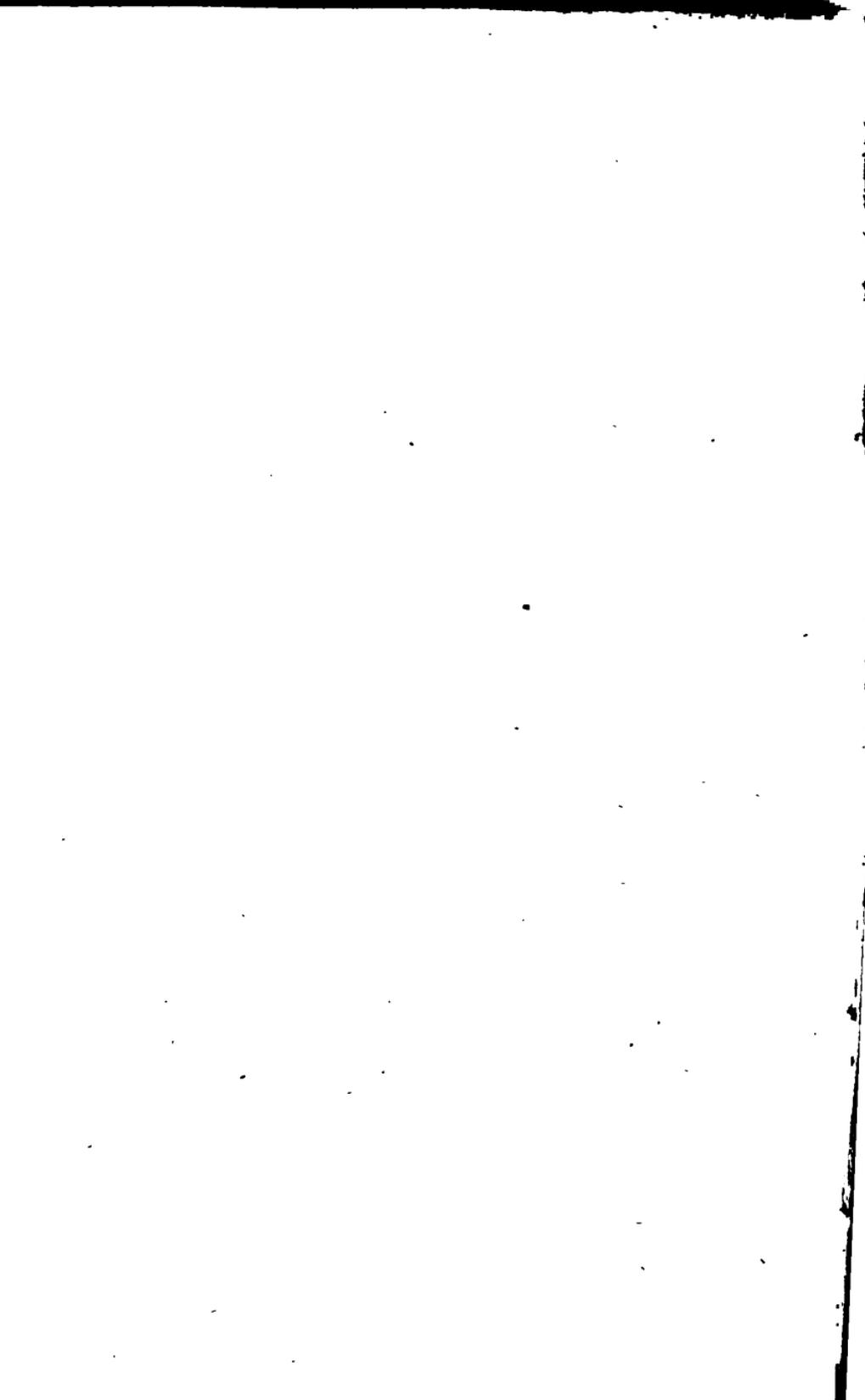
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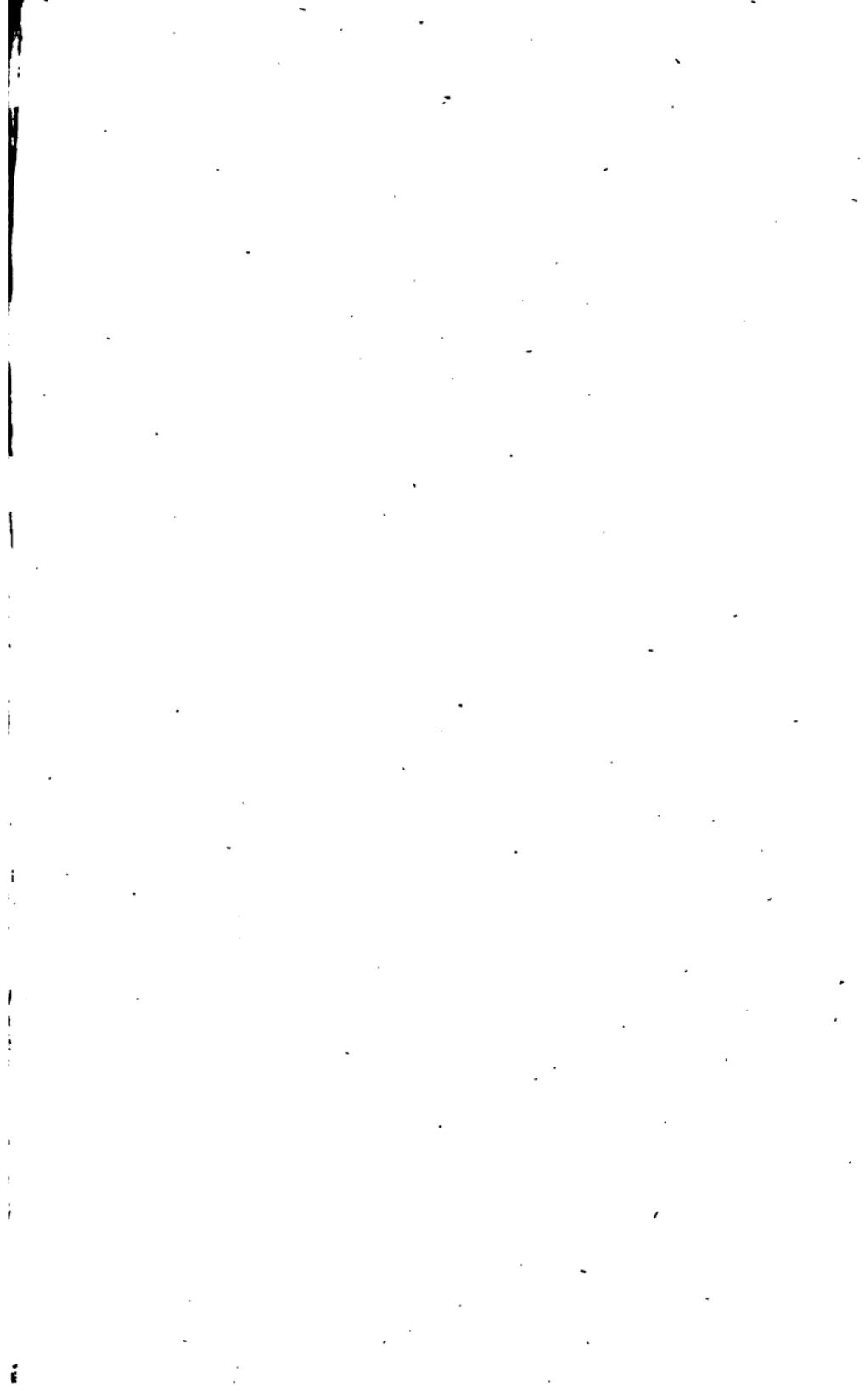














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